

EDITORIAL

NANAK II : GURU ANGAD DEV JI – A HOMAGE –

Sikhs all over the world are celebrating the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Angad Dev *ji*. Special functions will be organised on the 18th April, 2004, in every gurdwara and by all Sikh organisations, to pay homage to the Guru and to recall the debt we owe to him. The SGPC has drawn up an elaborate year-long programme of activities to highlight the Guru's unique contribution to the advancement of the Sikh movement. The nucleus of celebrations will rightly be Khadur Sahib, where the Guru stayed practically for the entire period of his guruship.

Guru Angad who succeeded Guru Nanak, was born at Matte di Sarai, now known as Sarai Nanga, in the present day district of Faridkot, about 16 km. from Muktsar. His father, Phiria Mal or Bhai Pheru, a Trehan Khatri, and his mother, variously known as Sabhirai, Ramo, Daya Kaur and Mansa Devi, gave him the name Lahina. The name Angad was given to him by Guru Nanak later, implying that he had become a part or limb of his own body.

Lahina was married to Khivi, daughter of Devi Chand, a Marvah Khatri of Sanghar village in Amritsar district. The couple had two sons, Datu and Dasu, and a daughter, Amaro. It was through his daughter, that later the third Sikh Guru, Amar Das came in contact with Guru Angad Dev *ji*.

Initially a petty trader, in his village, Bhai Pheru became a money-lender in the area in his later life. After his death, Bhai Lahina shifted first to Hari Ke and then to Khadur Sahib, where he settled.

Like the rest of his village folk, Lahina worshipped goddess Durga, and as *Pujari* he annually organised a pilgrimage to Jvalamukhi temple. Kartarpur, where Guru Nanak lived, was on the way. The Guru's reputation had spread in the area, and it seems that Lahina had heard a lot about him from one Bhai Jetha, the sole Sikh in Khadur Sahib.

During one of the pilgrimages to Jvalamukhi, Lahina decided to

visit Kartarpur. When he met the Guru, he was virtually charmed by his personality and talk, and was instantly converted. He felt that he had realised what he had sought in vain in pilgrimages. He decided to stay at Kartarpur in the service of the Guru for the rest of his life. During this period, with his unquestioning loyalty, limitless patience, unparalleled devotion, and thorough understanding of his philosophy of life, he made a deep impression on the Guru's mind. The Guru, bestowed upon him the name Angad, and appointed him as his successor in 1539 CE even in his life time, to continue the mission of organising the Panth based on his philosophy, bypassing his own sons.

While the same divine light passed from one Guru to his successor, and all of them carried forward the same mission, there are certain outstanding facts and historical events associated with Guru Angad's life and pontificate, which need to be remembered and highlighted, particularly when we celebrate the 5th centennial of his birthday. Some of these are reproduced below:

- a) Gurbani Scribal Tradition : It seems Gurmukhi script had taken its final shape during the life time of Guru Nanak, as is clear from his *patti* recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib. Presumably, the Guru's *bani* was recorded in this script. It was left to Guru Angad, however, to establish the tradition by introducing its teaching among the Sikhs in regular classes. In fact, according to I B Banerjee, "The credit for initiating the work that finally led to the compilation of (Guru) Granth Sahib, is also due to Guru Angad."
- b) Succession of Guruship : It was through Guru Angad, that the system of succession materialised. He demonstrated that a Sikh could, through devotion and loyalty, earn the grace of the Guru, and title to Guruship. It also established the tradition of determining succession based on merit and not on heredity.
- c) A Written Language : According to Khushwant Singh, Guru Angad provided the Sikhs with their own written language which was distinct from the script of the *Vedas* and the *Quran*. It provided a distinct identity to the Sikhs as a separate community from both Hindus and the Muslims. (*A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 52).
- d) Unity of Guruship : Guru Angad introduced the practice of composing the *bani* under the name of Nanak, which was followed by all succeeding Gurus. This underlined the unity and continuity of guruship.
- e) *Kirt Karo, Vand Chhako, Naam Japo* : There was no dearth of money received through offerings. But Guru Angad lived on simple

coarse meals earned through twisting strings of *munj* (reed fibre). Side by side he ran a *langar* and institutionalised it. And with equal emphasis on *Naam*, his life was a practical demonstration of Guru Nanak's doctrine of *Kirt karo*, *vand chhako* and *Naam japo* among Sikhs.

- f) Balanced Development : The Guru rejected the prevailing practice of lopsided development of individual with emphasis on mind or spirit alone. He believed that a sound mind could exist in a sound body only. He, therefore, preached, practised and introduced programmes of all-round development of the individual as well as society. He laid emphasis on physical fitness through sports, particularly wrestling, which appeared to be his favourite. A gurdwara *Mall Akhada* at Khadur Sahib where training in wrestling was imparted and competitions were held regularly during the Guru's time, stands testimony to his keen interest in sports. As stated earlier, the Guru organised classes and personally taught Punjabi and Gurmukhi script to his Sikhs. Thus, the Guru ensured total development of the personality of his Sikhs, and health of the society. Human Resource Development is a new concept of the modern times. It is amazing that the Guru introduced and practised it 500 years ago.
- g) Guru Angad did not itinerate, unlike his predecessor. It was, in fact, necessary, since the gains from Guru Nanak's itineraries had to be consolidated. Guru Nanak had instructed him to organise the Panth – *Purkha*, *Panth Kar* (ਪੁਰਖਾ, ਪੰਥ ਕਰ). A large number of *sangats* had been created, which had to be knitted together under a single organisation. It was necessary to prepare individuals through education for taking up this responsibility. This required his full time presence at Khadur Sahib, which had become a nucleus and a rallying point for all Sikhs. Because of this programme, it became possible for Guru Amar Das to introduce the *manji* system and to man the *manjis* with Sikhs competent to handle the responsibilities involved.
- h) Guru Angad introduced the practice of assigning important roles to women in organisational affairs. Mata Khivi ji, the Guru's wife, held charge of the *langar*, and won the praise of all for her generosity and efficient management, which is recorded in the *Var* of Satta and Balwand. This was an important step towards gender equality, preached by Guru Nanak.

i) Selection of Goindwal as a Sikh Centre, which has played a very important role in the development of Sikhism, was made by Guru Angad. He also took the required initiative and laid its foundation.

The above list is only illustrative in nature. Nobody can count his blessings. The current celebration of the fifth centenary of his birth is only an expression of the gratitude we owe him. The occasion should, however, be utilised for carrying forward the Guru's mission and giving widest publicity to his teachings. Whole-life approach to religion, laying emphasis on physical development as much as on spiritual development is a unique feature of the Guru's discipline, which needs to be highlighted. The Guru stressed the need for education. It is a pity that nearly one third of the population of Punjab is still illiterate, which does no credit to us, and demands urgent attention. It is hoped that celebrations will go beyond the usual fan-fare, and include programmes that can yield lasting tangible results. Some hints in that direction were given in the last issue of the AOSS.

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Guru Angad is the one who is the preceptor of both the worlds.

Through the grace of the God, he is benevolent to the sinful ones.(55)

His celestial appreciation cannot be narrated even by both the worlds.

And for his dignity even the celestial extent is not enough.(60)

It is, therefore, better if, through his magnanimity, We gain his generosity and through that pray for divine blessing.(61)

Our head may always pay obeisance at his feet,

And both, our body and our mind,

Sacrifice themselves for him.(62)

— Ganjnama, Bhai Nand Lal

GURU NANAK'S SRI LANKA VISIT – A MYTH OR REALITY ? –

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Even before the advent of Islam, India was torn into warring sections and sub-sections. Casteism had reduced the body-politic into a listless and ineffective, almost lifeless, mass lacking any cohesion. The ground was thus fertile for the Muslim invaders, who, from Mahmud Ghazni onwards, could plunder and subjugate the entire community and its teeming millions without effective show of resistance on the part of the latter. Islam, which was the religion of the conquerors, remained the state religion with conversion of unbelievers as the chief aim of the state policy. Apart from this assault from above, there was an inbuilt situation of unmitigated exploitation by the superior classes of Hindus of their low caste Hindu brethren.

At this juncture Guru Nanak appeared on the scene, and declared the Fatherhood of God above and the Brotherhood of Man below on earth. His gospel acted as a new challenge of a committed individual soul to the seemingly invincible might of the all-powerful State and its policies – based on religious intolerance, hatred and exploitation of man by man on grounds of religion and caste-superiority.

In fact all those factors for the reduction of which the Great Guru took four hazardous journeys to the four corners of the known world of his times, were directed towards a harmonious socio-religious order and national integrity. To achieve his aim Guru Nanak travelled far and wide, and visited almost all centres of bigotry, Hindu as well as Muslim, as a devoted student in quest of abiding solutions to all the social ills, which had bisected the society. He carried within himself a heart brimming with humanistic compassions and a mind with an insight that could diagnose correctly.

Guru Nanak's name is interlocked not only with the idea of one integrated India, but also with the vision of one world and with the unity of man. When he started his mission, the first slogan he raised

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was: “There is no Hindu and no Mussalman”. He meant thereby, that all human beings were brothers and sisters, being the scions of one Almighty God. The Guru taught:

It is the same spirit that pervadeth all.

It is His Light which illuminates every being.¹

The crux of Guru Nanak's teachings and solutions to all ills, was the realization of Truth and after that the realization of the self. Then the self has to be developed and elevated. It has to soar above the ego and obsessions of superiority and inferiority complexes which carry seed of hatred for one another. Self, when purely developed, will stand up in self-confidence, in a sense of equality and as an institution in itself. For this purpose the Guru gives instructions and sets examples, but at the same time envisages individual independent effort and action. The freedom for the individual to proceed along the right path is, therefore, of utmost importance.

Guru Nanak's Travels

Beginning from 1507, Guru Nanak (after resigning his post as store incharge under Daulat Khan at Sultanpur) left the home and service, became *faqir* and undertook four missionary journeys.²

Along with Mardana (the Muslim minstrel of Talwandi), the Guru commenced their wanderings over many lands, interviewing saints and gathering spiritual experience. During the course of his series of four missionary journeys, Guru Nanak visited all the holy places and towns of importance in India, Ceylon, Persia and Arabia. These journeys seem to have been taken up in about fifteen years and were undertaken during the last forty years of his life.

Soon after Guru Nanak's demise in 1539, there grew a legend of his visit to Sri Lanka. It is further pointed out that at the time of compilation of the *Adi Granth* in 1604, Guru Arjun Dev had sent one of his disciples to Sri Lanka to bring Pran Sangali, which was composed and left in Sri Lanka by the founder of the Sikh religion. However, according to the same author, Guru Arjun Dev did not find it genuine and hence did not include it in the *Adi Granth*.³

Haqiqat Rah Muqam Raja Shivnabh Ki

However, some unknown person recorded an account of the route leading to Sri Lanka on the flyleaf of a manuscript copy of the *Adi Granth*. This was apparently done without the approval of Guru Arjun Dev. This account is captioned *Haqiqat Rah Muqam Raja Shivnabh Ki*

which was later copied by several other scribes.

It is rightly believed that the Haqiqat Rah Muqam Raja Shivnabh, with the exception of the route of Sri Lanka given there, is confusing and full of self contradictions. Fortunately, however, the recent researches on this issue show that whatever meagre information is contained in the manuscript, is basically true. Since there is a definite mention of the Guru's visit to Sri Lanka in various traditional sources, it will not be a futile attempt to study the whole issue from the point of view of history.

Raja Shivnabh

In the *Janam Sakhis* it has been stated that Guru Nanak met Raja Shivnabh. The very name indicates that the Guru met a Shaivite Raja. However, Shivnabh does not appear to be a proper name. It only indicates a Shaivite Raja or a Raja who is a follower of Shiva. The ruling princes of Sri Lanka at the beginning of the sixteenth century were either Shaivites or Buddhists. There were two powerful Sinhali kingdoms with their capitals at Kotte and Gampota (Kandy). The rulers of these states were adherents of Buddhism. The third was the Jaffna kingdom with its capital at Nullure. Its ruler was Shaivite. During the same period the rulers of the vassal states on the eastern coast were Shaivites. Guru Nanak appears to have met some Tamil Hindu Shaivite ruler of Sri Lanka.⁴

It is most certain and agreed to by almost all authorities that Guru Nanak (1469-1539 AD) would not have visited Sri Lanka before 1510 AD, which may be considered as the date of probable visit to that island. It will, therefore, not be out of place here to review the political conditions and socio-religious conditions of Sri Lanka in the opening of the sixteenth century.

Sri Lanka in the Early Sixteenth Century

The political and socio-religious conditions of Sri Lanka in the early sixteenth century was the product of the process of Indian immigration going on for several centuries and to a fairly large extent there had been Tamil immigrations from the South India since times immemorial. The Tamil immigrants were mostly Hindu Shaivites who had taken refuge in Sri Lanka during the early phase of the Turkish invasions, beginning with the sack of Somnath by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni.⁵

Sri Lanka undoubtedly witnessed a great cultural impact during

the period of domination of Pandya and Chola kings. There is also no denying the fact that under the pressure of circumstances created by incessant Tamil invasions of Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese kings left their ancient capitals at Anuradhapura and Polonurwa and occupied the strongholds further down in the south. This led to the rise of the Jaffna kingdom in the North and several vassal states in the eastern coast of Sri Lanka, which we find in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Cultural Impact of Tamil Domination

The Cult of Shiva had been very popular with the Tamil immigrants in Sri Lanka during the period under review. During the period of the Chola domination of Sri Lanka both the kings as well as the masses belonging to south India were mostly Shaivites. The cultural impact was so strong that the Shaivites of the south had developed their teachings into a philosophical system known as “Shaiva Sidhant”⁶

Sir William Jones writes about an ancient Hindu temple at Trincomalle which was destroyed by the Portuguese in the seventeenth century: “This island was peopled, time out of memory, by the Hindu race, the temple which stood at Trincomalle is not to be forgotten. It would have remained to the present day a venerable relic, had not the misguided religious zeal of the Portuguese razed it to the ground in 1622 to supply material to one of their fortifications.”⁷

There were three fairly large kingdoms and several vassal states. The most prominent was the Sinhalese kingdom situated in the southwest with its capital at Kotte (near modern Colombo). The second Sinhalese kingdom, known as Kandyan, was situated on the central highland regions with its capital first at Gampola and later (after 1540 AD) at Kandy. The third was the Tamil kingdom in north Sri Lanka, which included Jaffna Peninsula, the coastal areas as far as Mannar and many other adjacent islands with its capital at Nallur, near Jaffna town. The vassal states, seven in number⁸, were (1) Mullatива (2) Trincomalee (3) Batticola (4) Kottiyar (5) Palugana (6) Panam and (7) Yala. These were mostly found in Vanni district, south of Jaffna peninsula and along the eastern coast.

Guru Nanak's mission was not to sit still, but to spread the knowledge of true God throughout the land. From this time till he reached old age he was a wanderer, journey from city to city and country to country, preaching his gospel, making disciples, and discussing with holy men of every caste and creed.

The missionary journey under review in this brief paper is the

second one, which extended to deep South and included the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The Guru's pilgrimage to Ceylon is, as favourite with the Sikhs as the other ones, like that of Mecca and Madina.

The legends about the great heroes of the past are a recognised source of information. However exaggerated or complicated a legend might be, says Sir Alfred Lyall, it is based on a kernel of truth.⁹ At times some complications do arise and this is what exactly happened in the case of the legend of Guru Nanak's visit to Sri Lanka.¹⁰

Meharban's account¹¹ describes the travels of the Guru in the most realistic way. Unlike the author of *Puratan Janam Sakhi* he does not bother about separate identity of long travels of the Guru in different directions like East, South, North and West. The subsequent writers were very particular about these directions and they made the Guru return from Jagannath Puri to the Punjab in order to indicate the end of eastern travels. But according to Meharban the Guru turned towards the South after finishing his eastern travels.¹²

This appears to be more correct. According to Kirpal Singh, 'The Guru, who was to visit South India would not have returned to the North from Puri without visiting the South'. This is further confirmed when we find a regular pilgrim's route from Puri going to Kanchipuram and other places of pilgrimage, in the south. For the first time Meharban linked the eastern and southern travels of the Guru. Again according to *Wilayat Wali Janam Sakhi* the Guru returned from his long travels after twelve years. That can only be possible if the Guru had visited the Eastern India and Southern India in a single stretch. Bhai Gurdas too described this long sojourn in a single line:

ਬਾਬਾ ਆਇਆ ਤੀਰਥੈ, ਤੀਰਥ ਪੁਰਥਿ ਸਭੇ ਫਿਰਿ ਦੇਖੇ ॥

Baba (Guru Nanak) went for pilgrimage and visited all the pilgrimage centres.

Doubts have been raised by some modern writers¹³ with regard to the Guru's travels beyond the limits of Hindustan. It is argued that 'Bhai Mardana died before him, and all that is known was collected from the mouth of Bhai Bala an ignorant Jat, who undertook to record many years after all that he had seen. Again, the people who drew up the narrative were ignorant of geography, and of the distances of one city from the other. All that they could do was to enter at random the names of all the places, of which they had ever heard from travellers, or books. We thus meet with the names of Lanka, the Dwipa of Puranas, Sind, Kabul, Khuram, and we find that the Guru availed himself of the easy mode of transport of flying through the air, or wishing himself at

any place, or directing the place to come to him. This entirely prevents us from following him, and describing what happened to him at each place on his travels.'

Again according to Ibbetson, "Soon he set out on his second or southward pilgrimage. That he ever reached Ceylon or founded there a *sangat* (congregation) of his disciples is hardly probable, and if he did so few authentic details of this journey have been preserved."¹⁴

"There is reason to doubt", according to Khushwant Singh,¹⁵ "the extent of this (Ceylon) journey. The *janamsakhis* are unanimous in stating that the King of Ceylon was a Hindu. This is historically incorrect. Besides, there is very little direct reference to Buddhism in Guru Nanak's compositions: only Buddhist nomenclature like *nirvana*, *sangat*, etc., which are also used by the Hindus, appear in his hymns. This is fairly conclusive evidence that he had little or no contact with Buddhism in practice. Hew McLeod in the *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* also questions the authenticity of the *janamsakhis* and maintains that evidence in support of Nanak's travels is not reliable."

However, as against these few observations, we have a host of evidence to prove the authenticity of Guru Nanak's missionary pilgrimage to Ceylon.

According to *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*¹⁶ of Khushwaqt Rai: "Nanak Shah then went to Singaldeep. Having heard of his (Nanak's) praises, Raja Shivnabh of that place was anxious to see him. He had vowed that he would believe the arrival of Nanak only if his dry garden were to become green. This came to happen. With the touch of Nanak's feet the dry garden became green and fruitful. The Raja still had some doubt. The Raja's wife had given birth to a daughter but she had told him that a son had been born. She went to Nanak Shah and prayed in all humility that if, with his blessings, the daughter could become a boy, and she would be saved from the wrath of the Raja. Nanak told her that her wish would be fulfilled. The female child became a boy. Seeing this the Raja and the Rani became his disciples with heart and soul."¹⁷

Some western scholars have rightly compared the Indian reformer's crusade against errors in the then prevailing religion with Luther, the German monk. According to Gordon:

"Nanak was the only (Hindu) reformer who established a national faith. He rose out of the dust as a great preacher with a great theme, which he boldly proclaimed, waking up the people to a higher notion of religion. It is strange coincidence that from being a Hindu

devotee he did so at the very time when Luther, the German monk, nailed his famous theses to his church door at Wittenberg, starting the Reformation in the West, both intent on denouncing what they considered the errors in their religions.”¹⁸

According to G Duncan :

“It was during his first Udasi or missionary journey (1507-1515) that the Guru went by sea or land to Rameshwaram. He was wearing wooden sandals and rope twisted on his head for a turban, a patch and streak as caste mark, and carrying a staff in hand. He defended himself from the criticisms of the Jains of South and then satirized them mercilessly, and by a short poem, now in the *Asa Di War*, converted the brutal rulers of some island on the way.¹⁹ From Rameshwaram he crossed the sea to Ceylon: he made the garden of Raja Shivanabha here blossom miraculously and wrote his mystical treatise *Pransangali*, leaving it with the Raja who vainly tried to detain this mysterious yogi at his court.”²⁰

Guru Nanak and Buddhism

To follow Guru Nanak further is to test him in a larger situation as a conscious devotee and minister of truth. On one of his journeys he had the occasion to consider items of Buddhist reformation, even though Buddhism was mostly a faint memory in Nanak’s day.²¹ But the greater, kindred, original Buddhist movement had long since vanished from the Indian scene, its original homeland itself endured eastward of Benaras where Buddhist recollection could still be stirred and beyond northern India in Ladakh, Tibet, and thereabouts, was the Lamaistic type which Nanak could have known about.

The Sikh tradition brings south India, also, into the total picture, that is, India of the Tamil culture. The Sikh *Janamsakhi* comments on the dress of Guru Nanak while he toured the south, as if he had adopted temporarily something more conventional: wooden sandals and a turban of twisted rope on his head. Further the tradition records that he also wore on his forehead “a patch and a streak”, something like the Vishnuite patch and the Shivite streak.

Guru Nanak according to Archer, had gone as far, some time or other, as Ceylon, if we may believe the *Janamsakhi*. In any case the real intent may be to indicate that he wanted to take some further reckoning of the Buddhist gospel. And yet the lure of Ceylon, whose ancient capital was Lanka of the Epic story, may have been by that time purely Hindu. Tamil culture prevailed in the northern Ceylon in

Nanak's day, but Hinayana Buddhism was elsewhere in the island. Guru Nanak, according to Archer, may indeed have sought out the Ceylon of Hindu legend, and the *Janamsakhi* says he was the guest of the Raja of the island.²²

Archer further adds, 'But the Buddhist element is still inescapable, whatever Nanak may have known of it. The Buddhist Mahavamsa, or the Ceylon Chronicle, says that the Raja of the time was 'faithful to the religion of Buddha. This "time", however, may have been that of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when Ceylon's name was glorious and its rule even included southern India. But Buddhism, nevertheless, was in Nanak's day the national religion of the island, and many royal personages earned immortality by their protection of it, insuring the continuity of its long tradition. At the same time Hinduism itself provided the closest bonds between Ceylon and India in that century and subsequently. Tamil culture was common, as has been said, and the Tamil language was the usual channel of intercourse. And the Hindu shrines were numerous, often in close proximity to Buddhist monasteries. To the casual observer the mingling seemed almost indiscriminate.'²³

The *Janamsakhi* does not indicate, however, that Guru Nanak was aware of much of this complex condition in Ceylon. It says that the Raja that he interviewed asked him his name and caste (a usual, initial question), whether he was a Brahmin or a trader, a Hindu or a Muslim (caste was represented among Muslims also at that time), asked him if perhaps, he was really "Gorakhnath" from the Himalayas "above the sky"? Nanak answered, it seems, very vaguely, enigmatically, and this in itself intrigued the Raja who forthwith took him to the palace and introduced him to the queen. Archer further argues, "There is no report of any visit to Bo-tree of Anuradhapura or to the temple of the sacred tooth at Kandy."²⁴

Guru Nanak expounded in Ceylon the gospel of that supreme state of man in which there is neither joy nor mourning, no castes nor any marks of caste, neither sermons nor scripture, no hopes and no desires, but only a mind at rest in God — which betrays, at least, some probable awareness on the story-teller's part of Buddhist doctrine. Sikhs, of course, since Nanak's day have known many Buddhists and have had occasion to consider many implications of Nanak's reputed visit to Ceylon.²⁵

The Guru proceeded towards Ceylon. On being told that a great *faqir* had come from India to visit his land, the king, whose name is

given in the Sikh chronicles as Shivanabham, sent beautiful damsels to tempt him with their charm. But Nanak took no notice of them. Then the king himself came and asked: "What's thy name, thy caste? Are you a yogi "? A yogi is whose interior is cleansed with the discipline of God's love, and who is ever imbued with His Truth and whose comings and goings are ended. O God, what is thy Name, Thy caste? When thou callest me into Thy Presence, I would ask Thee to answer the questionings of my mind". Then, the king asked, "Are you a Brahmin?" Nanak answered, "A Brahmin is he who bathes in the water of God's wisdom, and knows the One alone whose light permeates the three worlds."²⁶

The king asked, "Are you a Khatri, a shopkeeper?" Then the Guru replied, "My tongue is the beam, my heart is the scale, and I weigh therewith the Essence of the Unknown. There is but one shop, and one Merchant, and the customers too are all of the same type."²⁷ Then he asked if he was a Hindu or a Muslim, Nanak replied, "The true Guru has resolved the differences for him of the two ways. He who is yoked to the One alone, he cherishes His Word and dispels His Doubt."

The king was much impressed by these answers, and asked about the state of being such as the one Nanak had described to him. Nanak answered in most subtle terms:

"The man of God lives in a state of super-consciousness, a Void it is, where there is neither joy nor sorrow, hope or desire, caste nor caste marks, no sermons, no hymning of hymns; seated in himself, man meditates, composed like the sky, and knows himself."²⁸

This composition, consisting of 40 stanzas and known as *Pransangli* is no longer extant. The Guru blessed the king and said, "Thy devotion will be approved by God." The king became a great devotee of Nanak, and did much good to his subjects, so much that the people said, " Our king has no love left for the joys of the world. He lives ever in Nanak and God."²⁹

Which Kingdom did Guru Nanak Visit?

According to recent researches, one of the possibilities is that the Shaivite ruler of Jaffila Pararaja Sekarn (1478-1519 AD) met Guru Nanak. According to Pillay, certain saints, who came from south India, were honoured at his court.³⁰

It is further argued that the Raja of Jaffna, who was related to the Raja of Rameshwaram (which was nearest place to India) might have invited Guru Nanak to his kingdom. However, there is no conclusive

evidence to this theory propounded by C Sivaratnam,³¹ the author of *Cultural History and Principles of Hinduism*.

Leaving aside Jaffna kingdom, the other probability is that Guru Nanak might have visited one of the seven vassal states Mullaitiva, Pannama, Yala, Trincomalle, Kottiyar, Palugana and Batticola. The Sikh sources, notably *Twarikh Gur Khalsa*, state that Guru Nanak met the ruler of Mattia Kulam, south of Trincomale.

Of these vassal states, Batticola, however, offers the greatest possibility. According to the Batticola Monograph published by the Dutch during the seventeenth century, the place was known by the Tamil name “Mudda Kulapa”, which is synonym with ‘Matty a Kulam’. Both the names mean a “muddy lagoon”.³²

According to *Haqiqat*, people embark ship from Nagapatonam (near Tanjore in India) and in three days and three nights a ship reaches a sea port beyond Jaffna.’ It implies that the place of Raja Shivnabh is beyond Jaffna and was at a distance of three days journey from Nagapatonam. When Vascoda Gama came to India via Cape of Good Hope in 1498 AD, he went to Sri Lanka also. According to the ship diary³³ “Ceylon is eight days journey from Calicut.” It is well known that the first port occupied by the Portuguese in Sri Lanka was Colombo. It, therefore, implies that the distance from Calicut to Colombo in a ship, during the period under review, was covered in eight days. If we calculate in the same way, we come to conclusion that a ship of those days could cover about one third of that distance in three days from Nagapatonam and would have reached near Batticaloa on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka.

Batticoloa

Batticoloa , according to the Monograph published by Sri Lanka Government, was one of the earliest Aryan settlements in Sri Lanka with its history going back to the epic age. Investigations of the ruins and inscriptions in the neighbourhood, supported by local traditions, leave no doubt about the early Indian traditions. Batticoloa, appears to be an earlier settlement than Jaffna as per the above monograph published by the Government of Sri Lanka which states that, “The occupation of Batticoloa by the Tamils is said to have been earlier than that of Jaffna, which latter was not inhabited until the blind minstrel brought colonists from the Pandya kingdom. According to Kirpal Singh, the village was founded in the memory of Sidh Guru Nath who came here from north of India about four hundred and fifty years ago.

He is still remembered and revered by the people living there. A Shiva temple has been built where he sat.

The name of the village ‘Kurukal Mandap’ is a Tamil name which means “Guru’s Village”. Recent researches have led to the discovery of an inscription mentioning the name of “Nanak Acharya” about which further investigations are being carried out. It is however, certain the very name (Nanak) mentioned in the inscription testify to the theory that Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion visited Sri Lanka during his last *Udasi*.³⁴

Conclusion

It may be asserted without doubt that of all the world prophets, Guru Nanak was the greatest travelled man, and this speaks volumes of his zeal for the dissemination of his divine doctrines in India and abroad, in countries thousands of miles away from homeland.

The southern missionary journey of Guru Nanak Dev is not only marked by a long line of gurdwaras marking the whole length of the Deccan Peninsula, down to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), but also new epigraphical and archaeological evidence discovered in the Sri Lanka itself, now confirms that Guru Nanak’s visit to Ceylon was a momentous religious event worthy to be recorded in stone under royal orders and also devoutly remembered by generations of local folk up to this day.

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### **NOTES AND REFERENCES**

1. ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Amritsar, 1604, *Raag Dhanasri*, M 1, p. 13

2. The first *Udasi* (or missionary journey) extended from 1507 to 1515 (to the East); the second from 1517 to 1518 (to the South) and the third one from 1518 to 1521 (to the North) after which he settled down at Kartarpur as an ordinary householder. His last journey was to Achal Batala, Pakpattan, Dipalpur and Multan in 1539 (to the West).

3. Kirpal Singh, *Perspectives on Sikh Gurus*, (Delhi, 1996), p. 171. The author is thankful to Kirpal Singh for providing valuable source material relating to the Guru’s visit to Sri Lanka and gratefully

- acknowledges his findings in preparation of this paper.
4. The study of *Janamsakhis* indicates that at several places only caste, occupation or race, like Uppal (caste), Pathans (race), Karoria (revenue official) etc., is given in order to indicate the person of that class. Kirpal Singh, op. cit., p.175.
  5. Rev. James Cartman, *Hinduism in Ceylon* (Colombo, 1957), p.41, cited in Kirpal Singh, op. cit., p.178, footnote 6. For more details see also K.K.Pillay, *South India and Ceylon* Madras, 1963
  6. Rev. James Cartman, op. cit., p. 35
  7. Vide *Ceylon Literary Register*, September 24, 1885, Vol. I, no. 7, p. 63
  8. Kirpal Singh, op. cit., p 173, fn.9 .The vassal states were (1) Mullatива (2) Trincomalee (3) Batticoloa (4) Kottiyar (5) Palugana (6) Panam and (7) Yala.
  9. Sir Alfred Lyal, *Asiatic Studies (Religious and Social)*, Vol. VI (London, 1899), p.326
  10. Kirpal Singh, op. cit., p.171
  11. See Kirpal Singh, 'Historical Significance of Janam Sakhi of Guru Nanak by Meharban' in *Proceedings, Punjab History Conference*, Patiala, 1970,pp.126-27
  12. *Janam Sakhi Meharban*, p. 104, Kirpal Singh, op. cit., p. 126
  13. Robert Needham Cust, "Guru Nanak the Indian Reformer" in *Pictures of Indian Life*, London, 1881, p.206
  14. Sir Denzil Ibbetson and Sir Edward D MacLagan, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and NWFP*. Vol. I, Lahore, 1919,p. 678
  15. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, (Oxford, Delhi, 1977), p. 33, fn.19
  16. The Manuscript was originally written in 1811 for Col. David Ochterlony of the East India Company's service. The portion dealing with Guru Nanak is translated from the Ms in the collection of Dr. Ganda Singh and incorporated in 'Sources on the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak,' *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. III, Patiala, 1969, pp. 370-76.
  17. *Ibid.* p. 373
  18. Sir John J.B. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London, 1904, p.23
  19. *Ibid.* p. 23 ; *The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib*, Madras, 1960, p. 286; Ganda Singh(ed.) "Sources on the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. III, 1969, p.286
  20. *Ibid.*, p.286

21. J.C. Archer, *The Sikhs... A Study in Comparative Religion*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1946, p.88
22. *Ibid*, p. 93
23. *Ibid*
24. *Ibid*, p.95
25. Archer, *Ibid*, p. 95
26. Gopal Singh, *Guru Nanak* ( New Delhi, 1967) p. 40; Kirpal Singh, *Janamsakhi Parampara, Itihasik Drishtikon ton*, (Punjabi), (Patiala, 1969), pp. 76-81
27. *Ibid*
28. *Ibid*
29. *Ibid*
30. K.K. Pillay, *South India and Ceylon*, (Madras, 1963), p. 136
31. C. Sivaratnam, *Cultural History and Principles of Hinduism*, p. 119, cited in Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p.175
32. *Ibid*, p.176. *Ibid* Whatever may be the contents of the “*Haqiqat Rai Muqam Raja Shivnabh Ki*”, its purpose, as its title indicates, was to give an account of the route leading to the place of Raja Shivnabh.
33. Anonymous, *Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama* published in the ‘*Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*’, Ceylon Branch, 1908, Vol. XIX, 1906- 7, Colombo, 1908, p. 321
34. Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p.178.

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*Should a hundred moons rise and a thousand suns –  
With all this illumination,  
Without the Guru's guidance all remains pitch darkness.*

– Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 463

ਜੇ ਸਉ ਚੰਦਾ ਉਗਵਹਿ ਸੂਰਜ ਚੜਹਿ ਹਜਾਰ ॥  
ਏਤੇ ਚਾਨਣ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧਾਰ ॥

## BABA SHEIKH FARID – A GREAT SAINT –

BIRENDRA KAUR\*

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Baba Sheikh Farid, in his writings, lays great emphasis on love and longing for the Almighty, detachment from worldly goods and pleasures, and being mindful of death at all times. His whole life reflects this philosophy. Ever engrossed in His praise, he lived the life of a hermit; his only possessions being a rough straw-cot and a worn-out small blanket hardly sufficient to cover his body. His clothes were generally old and tattered. He resided, in accordance with the Sufi tradition, in a mud house. Whatever he received as offering, was not with him for more than a day; it would be distributed amongst the poor and the needy. All he desired was\*\* :

*Lord ! In Thee I seek shelter.  
Thou the Bestower of forgiveness.  
Grant to Sheikh Farid the charity of Thy devotion.<sup>1</sup>*

In spite of thousands of followers, his humility knew no bounds :

*Farid, despite my black wear and clothing, full of sins am I,  
In the world's eyes though a Derwesh I appear.<sup>2</sup>*

### Passionate Devotee

Baba Farid's dedication to one Lord is unequivocal and direct; name of no intermediary finds mention in his *slokas*. His simple, yet lucid compositions conveying his love for God, give vent to the pangs of separation of a longing heart :

*O, thou crow, pecking at my emaciated body,  
Eating away its flesh,*

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\*\* All the quotations are from Guru Granth Sahib

1. ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਹ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਤੂ ਬਖਸੰਦਗੀ ॥  
ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦੈ ਥੈਰ ਦੀਜੈ ਬੰਦਗੀ ॥
2. ਫਰੀਦ ਕਾਲੇ ਮੈਡੇ ਕਪਦੇ ਕਾਲ ਸੈਡਾ ਵੇਸੁ ॥  
ਗੁਨਹੀ ਭਰਿਆ ਮੈਂ ਫਿਰਾ ਲੇਕੁ ਕਰੈ ਦਰਵੇਸੁ ॥

p. 488

p. 1381

*Pray touch not these two eyes,  
So I may have sight of the Beloved.<sup>3</sup>*

*Pray, O crow, peck not at my body;  
Fly off from where thou art settled.  
Swallow not the flesh of this body,  
Wherein is lodged the Beloved.<sup>4</sup>*

*In separation from God, my body burns like the furnace;  
My bones flame like firewood;  
To find union with the Beloved;  
I would walk on my head, if my feet be tired.<sup>5</sup>*

*Farid, in separation from the Master  
The nights seem endlessly long;  
My sides are burning in pain;  
Cursed is the life of those who seek other than Him.<sup>6</sup>*

*Farid, anguish is my bed, suffering the bed-strings;  
Separation from the Beloved, my bed-sheets;  
Such is my life; cast Thy glance of compassion on it, O Lord.<sup>7</sup>*

*Farid, the lanes are muddy : The Beloved's home far,  
Yet my love for Him is deep;  
If I stir out, my cloak will get wet; if I stay back,  
Am I false to my love.<sup>8</sup>*

*Let the cloak be drenched through;  
Let it rain ever so much;*

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| 3. ਕਾਗ ਕਰੰਗ ਢੱਬੇਲਿਆ ਸਗਲਾ ਖਾਇਆ ਮਾਸੁ ॥<br>ਏ ਦਾਇ ਨੈਨਾ ਮਤਿ ਛੁਹਉ ਪਿਰ ਦੇਖਨ ਕੀ ਆਸ ॥           | p. 1382 |
| 4. ਕਾਗ ਚੁੰਡਿ ਨ ਪਿੰਜਰਾ ਬਸੈ ਤ ਉਡਰਿ ਜਾਹਿ ॥<br>ਜਿਤੁ ਪਿੰਜਰੈ ਸੇਰਾ ਸਹੁ ਵਸੈ ਮਾਸੁ ਨ ਤਿਉ ਖਾਹਿ ॥  | p. 1382 |
| 5. ਤਨੁ ਤਪੈ ਤਨਰ ਜਿਓ ਬਾਲਣੁ ਹਡ ਬਲੰਨਿ ॥<br>ਪੈਰੀ ਥਕਾਂ ਸਿੰਜਿ ਜੁਲਾਂ ਜੇ ਮੁੰ ਪਿਰੀ ਮਿਲੰਨਿ ॥      | p. 1384 |
| 6. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰਾਤੀ ਵਡੀਆਂ ਧੁਖਿ ਧੁਖਿ ਉਠਨਿ ਪਾਸ ॥<br>ਧਿਗੁ ਤਿਨੁ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਨਾ ਵਿਡਾਣੀ ਆਸ ॥        | p. 1378 |
| 7. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਚਿੰਤ ਖਟੋਲਾ ਵਾਣੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਬਿਰਹਿ ਵਿਛਾਵਣੁ ਲੇਡੁ ॥<br>ਏਹੁ ਹਮਰ ਜੀਵਣਾ ਤੂ ਸਹਿਬ ਸਚੇ ਵੇਖੁ ॥ | p. 1379 |
| 8. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਗਲੀਏ ਚਿਕੜੁ ਦੂਰਿ ਘਰ ਨਾਲਿ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨੇਹੁ ॥<br>ਚਲਾ ਤ ਭਿਜੈ ਕੰਬਲੀ ਰਹਾ ਤ ਤੁਟੈ ਨੇਹੁ ॥    | p. 1379 |

*Go I must to meet the Loved one.  
So my love proves false not.* <sup>9</sup>

### Visionary

Baba Farid talks about the vices and fears of man, such as, consumerism, ego, death, etc. If anything, the degree of such afflictions has been on the rise with the passage of time, and these plague our society even more in the present century. His writings thus assume as much relevance today as ever.

Man has, through industrialisation and advancement in technology, improved his efficiency and comforts. But, he has not improved himself; moral and spiritual aspects have taken a back-seat. He grabs wealth, seeks pleasure, wishes to wield power, and strikes bargains only to benefit himself. Consumerism is rampant in society; everybody is desperate to acquire more and more. Display of wealth on person or otherwise is a parameter of one's success. More the possessions of an individual, higher the status he enjoys in society.

Baba's teachings are in stark contrast to such false values. His ideal, *darwesh*, is expected to inculcate the following qualities :

#### CONTENTMENT

*Farid, eat thy dry crust of bread; take simple cold water;  
Envy not the delicacies another is enjoying.* <sup>10</sup>

#### CLEMENCY

*Farid, strike not back those that strike thee blows;  
In utter humility and forgiveness turn towards thy home;* <sup>11</sup>

*Farid, return thou good for evil; in thy heart bear no revenge.  
Thus will thy body be free of maladies,  
And thy life have all blessings.* <sup>12</sup>

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| 9. ਭਿਜਉ ਸਿਜਉ ਕੰਬਲੀ ਅਲਹ ਵਰਸਉ ਮੇਹੁ ॥<br>ਜਾਇ ਮਿਲਾ ਤਿਨਾ ਸਜਣਾ ਤੁਟਉ ਨਹੀਂ ਨੇਹੁ ॥             | p. 1379 |
| 10. ਰੁਖੀ ਸੁਖੀ ਖਾਇ ਕੈ ਠੰਢਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਪੱਧੁ ॥<br>ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦੇਖਿ ਪਰਾਈ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਨ ਤਰਸਏ ਜੀਉ ॥           | p. 1379 |
| 11. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੋ ਤੈ ਮਾਰਨ ਮੁਕੀਆਂ ਤਿਨਾ ਨ ਮਾਰੋ ਘੁੰਮਿ ॥<br>ਆਪਨਕੈ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਪੈਰ ਤਿਨਾ ਦੇ ਚੁੰਮਿ ॥ | p. 1378 |
| 12. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬੁਰੇ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਸਾ ਮਨਿ ਨ ਹਵਾਇ ॥<br>ਦੇਹੀ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਪਲੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਇ ॥     | p. 1382 |

**HUMILITY**

*Farid, wouldst thou seek the Lord of all,  
Look to the grass under thy feet;  
Be like it, cut and trampled,  
Then wouldst thou enter the portal Divine.<sup>13</sup>*

**PATIENCE**

*Farid, serve the Master, throw all doubt from thy mind.  
Men of God need to be forbearing like trees.<sup>14</sup>*

*Make forbearance thy bow and bow-string;  
The arrow too of forbearance.  
God then will not let it go off its mark.<sup>15</sup>*

*Make forbearance thy life's ideal; learn hard this lesson;  
Thus wilt thou become a mighty river, not a petty channel.<sup>16</sup>*

**SELF-ANALYSIS**

*Farid, if thou be possessed of noble wisdom,  
Blacken not thy life's record.  
Look into thy life, what thy deeds are.<sup>17</sup>*

**PURPOSIVENESS**

*One part of the day didst thou waste in wandering,  
Part in sleep;  
When God asks thee to render thy account,  
What wilt thou say was thy life's aim ?<sup>18</sup>*

**GENTLENESS**

*Speak never a rude word to any,*

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| 13. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਥੀਉ ਪਵਾਹੀ ਦਭੁ ॥ ਜੇ ਸਾਂਈ ਲੋੜਹਿ ਸਭੁ ॥<br>ਇਕੁ ਛਿਜਹਿ ਬਿਆ ਲਤੜੀਅਹਿ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਈ ਦੈ ਦਰਿ ਵਾੜੀਅਹਿ ॥ | p. 1378 |
| 14. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੀ ਕਰਿ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਦਿਲ ਦੀ ਲਹਿ ਭਰਾਂਦਿ ॥<br>ਦਰਵੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਲੋੜੀਐ ਰੁਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੀਗਾਂਦਿ ॥          | p. 1381 |
| 15. ਸਬਰ ਮੰਡ ਕਮਾਣ ਏ ਸਬਰੁ ਕਾ ਨੀਹਣੈ ॥<br>ਸਬਰ ਸੰਦਾ ਬਾਣੁ ਖਾਲਕੁ ਖਤਾ ਨ ਕਰੀ ॥                             | p. 1384 |
| 16. ਸਬਰੁ ਏਹੁ ਸੁਆਉ ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਬੰਦਾ ਦਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਹਿ ॥<br>ਵਧਿ ਥੀਵਹਿ ਦਰੀਆਉ ਟੁਟਿ ਨ ਥੀਵਹਿ ਵਾਹੜਾ ॥                | p. 1384 |
| 17. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਅਕਲਿ ਲਤੀਫੁ ਕਾਲੇ ਲਿਖੁ ਨ ਲੇਖ ॥<br>ਆਪਨੜੇ ਗਿਰੀਵਾਨ ਮਹਿ ਸਿਰੁ ਨੌਰਾਂ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖੁ ॥          | p. 1378 |
| 18. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਚਾਰਿ ਗਵਾਇਆ ਹੰਦਿ ਕੈ ਚਾਰਿ ਗਵਾਇਆ ਸੰਮਿ ॥<br>ਲੇਖਾ ਰਥੁ ਮੰਗੋਸੀਆ ਤੂੰ ਆਂਹੇ ਕੇਰੇ ਕੰਮਿ ॥           | p. 1379 |

*The Lord Eternal in all abides :  
Break no heart – know, each being is a priceless jewel.<sup>19</sup>*

*Each heart is a jewel; evil it is to break any;  
Shouldst thou seek to find the Beloved, break no one's heart.<sup>20</sup>*

#### DETACHMENT

*Saith Farid : Set not thy heart on mansions and bowers;  
Under the immeasurable heap of earth  
None shall befriend thee.<sup>21</sup>*

*Farid, love not mansions and wealth;  
Keep in thy mind mighty death:  
Contemplate alone where thou hast perforce to go.<sup>22</sup>*

#### DISCRIMINATION

*Farid, seek vast lake wherein thou mayst find  
What thou seekest – God's Name :  
Why seek a filthy pond, muddying thy hands ?<sup>23</sup>*

#### TRUTHFULNESS

*Speak ever what is truthful and pure; shun what is false.<sup>24</sup>  
Those alone are true devotees  
Whose heart with God is sincerely in love :  
The ones whose heart is belied by their tongue  
Are known to be inconstant.<sup>25</sup>*

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| 19. ਇਕੁ ਫਿਕਾ ਨ ਗਾਲਾਇ ਸਭਨਾ ਮੈਂ ਸਚਾ ਧਣੀ ॥<br>ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਕੈਰੀ ਠਾਹਿ ਮਾਣਕ ਸਭ ਅਮੋਲਵੇ ॥        | p. 1384 |
| 20. ਸਭਨ ਮਨ ਮਾਣਕ ਠਾਹਣੁ ਮੂਲਿ ਮਚਾਂਗਵਾ ॥<br>ਜੇ ਤਉ ਪਿਰੀਆ ਦੀ ਸਿਕ ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਠਾਹੇ ਕਹੀ ਦਾ ॥     | p. 1384 |
| 21. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕੋਠੇ ਮੰਡਪ ਮਾੜੀਆ ਏਤੁ ਨ ਲਾਏ ਚਿਤੁ ॥<br>ਮਿਟੀ ਪਈ ਅਤੋਲਵੀ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਹੋਸੀ ਮਿਤੁ ॥      | p. 1380 |
| 22. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਮੰਡਪ ਮਾਲੁ ਨ ਲਾਇ ਮਰਗ ਸਤਾਣੀ ਚਿਤਿ ਧਰਿ ॥<br>ਸਾਈ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਲਿ ਜਿਥੈ ਹੀ ਤਉ ਵੰਵਣਾ ॥  | p. 1381 |
| 23. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਸੇਈ ਸਰਵਰੁ ਢੂਢਿ ਲਹੁ ਸਿਥਹੁ ਲਭੀ ਵਖੁ ॥<br>ਛਪਤਿ ਢੂਢੈ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਵੈ ਚਿਕਤਿ ਢੂਬੈ ਹਥੁ ॥ | p. 1380 |
| 24. ਬੋਲੀਐ ਸਚੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਝੂਠੁ ਨ ਬੋਲੀਐ ॥                                                   | p. 488  |
| 25. ਦਿਲਹੁ ਮੁਹਬਤਿ ਜਿਨ੍ਹ ਸੇਈ ਸਚਿਆ ॥<br>ਜਿਨ੍ਹ ਮਨਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਸਿ ਕਾਂਦੇ ਕਚਿਆ ॥       | p. 488  |

### Powers of Persuasion

Baba Farid brings home his point by highlighting the passing nature of life, inevitability of death, and futility of accumulating wealth and running after worldly pleasures. Actually, all ills of society can be traced to the fact that one is oblivious of one's death; one believes that one will live forever. Even those who are aware that life is short, only respond by making hay while the sun shines, forgetting the value of deeds in the Lord's court. Baba's frequent reference to these aspects shows that he is working on the root cause of all problems. His idiom is logical and convincing :

#### TRANSIENCY OF LIFE

*Those who commanded drums to be beaten for them,  
Umbrellas to rise over their heads;  
Trumpets to proclaim their glory.  
Ultimately they have been laid to rest in the graveyard,  
Buried under the earth, helpless.<sup>26</sup>*

*Saith Farid, those who erected vast mansions,  
Halls and bowers.  
False their doing, ultimately the grave their abode.<sup>27</sup>*

*Farid, life's bird is a passing guest; the world a lovely garden :  
Hear the drum of departure beaten since dawn,  
Get ready for the journey hence.<sup>28</sup>*

*Farid, this life is like ripe dates and rivers of honey.  
With each passing day, comes closer the grip of death.<sup>29</sup>*

*Farid, emptied of their occupants are left mansions;  
Their inmates gone to occupy abodes under the earth.  
In the lowly graves abide the dead.*

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| 26. ਪਾਸਿ ਦਮਾਮੇ ਛੜ੍ਹ ਸਿਰਿ ਭੇਰੀ ਸਡੈ ਰਡੁ ॥<br>ਜਾਇ ਸੁਤੇ ਜੀਰਾਣ ਮਹਿ ਥੀਏ ਅਤੀਮਾ ਗਡੁ ॥    | p. 1380 |
| 27. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕੋਠੇ ਮੰਡਪ ਮਾੜੀਆ ਉਸਰੇਦੇ ਭੀ ਗਏ ॥<br>ਕੁੜਾ ਸਉਦਾ ਕਰਿ ਗਏ ਗੋਰੀ ਆਇ ਪਏ ॥        | p. 1380 |
| 28. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਪੰਖ ਪਰਾਹੁਣੀ ਦੁਨੀ ਸੁਹਾਵਾ ਬਾਗੁ ॥<br>ਨਉਬਤਿ ਵਜੀ ਸੁਧਹ ਸਿਉ ਚਲਣ ਕਾ ਕਰਿ ਸਾਜੁ ॥ | p. 1382 |
| 29. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰਬ ਖਜੂਰੀ ਪਕੀਆਂ ਮਾਖਿਆ ਨਈ ਵਹੰਨਿ ॥<br>ਜੋ ਜੋ ਵੰਡੋਂ ਡੀਹੜਾ ਸੋ ਉਮਰ ਹਥ ਪਵੰਨਿ ॥ | p. 1382 |

*Tell proud ones of the world :  
Engage in prayer, for departure is at hand.<sup>30</sup>*

#### **INEVITABILITY OF DEATH**

*Saith Farid, thy quilt has numerous stitches to keep it together,  
But none to thy frame.*

*Friend, all that are revered and great,  
Must depart when their time comes.<sup>31</sup>*

*Saith Farid : The Angel of Death steals in,  
Despite our two burning lamps.  
He takes the fort, denudes the vessel,  
And leaving, extinguishes the lamps.<sup>32</sup>  
Consider Farid ! Where be thy parents who begot thee ?  
Gone on a never-ending journey,  
Still is thy heart unconvinced of thy own end.<sup>33</sup>*

*Farid, life is like a stork sporting on the river's bank;  
Suddenly on it has swooped the hawk.  
As comes this hawk from God, is all sport forgotten:  
God sends on man what never be thought or imagined.<sup>34</sup>*

*Listen, Sheikh ! None ever in this world got eternal life.  
Many before our day have warmed this seat.<sup>35</sup>*

*Thus saith Sheikh Farid : My loved friends,  
To Allah attach yourselves.  
This body must one day turn to dust,*

30. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਮਹਲ ਨਿਸਥਣ ਰਹਿ ਗਏ ਵਾਸਾ ਆਇਆ ਤਲਿ ॥  
ਗੋਰਾਂ ਸੇ ਨਿਮਾਣੀਆ ਬਹਸਨਿ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਮਲਿ ॥  
ਆਪੀਂ ਸੇਖਾ ਬੰਦਰੀ ਚਲਣੁ ਅਜੁ ਕਿ ਕਲਿ ॥ p. 1382
31. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬਿੰਬਿੜ ਸੇਖਾ ਅਗਲੀਆ ਜਿੰਦੁ ਨ ਕਈ ਸੇਖ ॥  
ਵਾਰੀ ਆਪੋ ਆਪਣੀ ਚਲੇ ਮਸਾਇਕ ਸੇਖ ॥ p. 1380
32. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦੁਹੁ ਦੀਵੀ ਬਲੰਦਿਆ ਮਲਕੁ ਬਹਿਨਾ ਆਇ ॥  
ਗੜੁ ਲੀਤਾ ਘਟੁ ਲੁਟਿਆ ਦੀਵੜੇ ਗਇਆ ਬੁਝਾਇ ॥ p. 1380
33. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕਿਥੈ ਤੈਡੇ ਮਾਪਿਆ ਜਿਨ੍ਹੀ ਤੂ ਜਣਿਓਹਿ ॥  
ਤੈ ਪਾਸਹੁ ਓਇ ਲਾਇ ਗਏ ਤੂੰ ਅਜੈ ਨ ਪਤੀਣੋਹਿ ॥ p. 1381
34. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦਰੀਆਵੈ ਕੰਨ੍ਹੈ ਬਗੁਲਾ ਬੈਠਾ ਕੇਲ ਕਰੇ ॥ ਕੇਲ ਕਰੇਦੇ ਹੰਤ ਨੋ ਅਚਿੰਤੇ ਬਾਜ ਪਏ ॥  
ਬਾਜ ਪਏ ਤਿਸੁ ਰਬ ਦੇ ਕੇਲਾਂ ਵਿਸਰੀਆਂ ॥ ਜੋ ਮਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਚੇਤੇ ਸਨਿ ਸੋ ਗਾਲੀ ਰਬ ਕੀਆਂ ॥ p. 1383

*And in the lowly grave lodge.<sup>36</sup>*

#### ROLE OF DEEDS

*Farid ! Give up what brings thee no merit,  
Lest thou be disgraced at the Court Divine.<sup>37</sup>*

*Farid, see how cotton and sesame are crushed in the press,  
So also sugarcane;  
How paper and the pot are put into the flames,  
Such will be the punishment of evil-doers.<sup>38</sup>*

*Farid ! Death is visible as the river's opposite bank.  
Beyond is flaming hell, resounding with loud shrieks.  
Some, of this, have realization;  
Many go about wrapped in thoughtlessness.  
Know, the deeds done in this world,  
Bear witness against us in the next.<sup>39</sup>*

*Behold, man departing this world  
Borne on the shoulders of four pall-bearers.  
Farid : Only the good deeds done by us in this world,  
Stand by us in the next.<sup>40</sup>*

*Farid, some there are who have excess of meal,  
Others do not have even salt for it;  
In the Beyond alone will it appear,*

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| 35. | ਸੇਖ ਹੈਮਾਤੀ ਜਗਿ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਥਿਰੁ ਰਹਿਆ ॥<br>ਜਿਸੁ ਆਸਣਿ ਹਮ ਬੈਠੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਥੈਸਿ ਗਇਆ ॥                                                                                                    | p. 488  |
| 36. | ਬੋਲੈ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਅਲਹ ਲੋਗੇ ॥<br>ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਹੌਸੀ ਖਕ ਨਿਮਾਣੀ ਰੋਰ ਘਰੇ ॥                                                                                                       | p. 488  |
| 37. | ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜਿਹੀ ਕੰਮੀ ਨਾਹਿ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਕੰਮੜੇ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ॥<br>ਮਤੁ ਸਰਮਿੰਦਾ ਥੀਵਹੀ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਵੈ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ॥                                                                                        | p. 1381 |
| 38. | ਫਰੀਦਾ ਵੇਖੁ ਕਪਹੈ ਜਿ ਥੀਆ ਜਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਥੀਆ ਤਿਲਾਹ ॥<br>ਕਮਦੈ ਅਰੁ ਕਾਗਦੈ ਕੁੰਨੇ ਕੋਇਲਿਆਹ ॥<br>ਮੰਦੇ ਅਮਲ ਕਰੇਦਿਆ ਏਹ ਸਜਾਇ ਤਿਨਾਹ ॥                                                          | p. 1380 |
| 39. | ਫਰੀਦਾ ਮਉਤੈ ਦਾ ਬੰਨ ਏਵੈ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਿਉ ਦਰੀਆਵੈ ਢਾਹਾ ॥<br>ਅਗੈ ਏਜ਼ਕ ਤਪਿਆ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਹੁਲ ਪਵੈ ਕਹਾਹਾ ॥<br>ਇਕਨਾ ਨੋ ਸਭ ਸੇਡੀ ਆਈ ਇਕਿ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਵੇਪਰਵਾਹਾ ॥<br>ਅਮਲ ਜਿ ਕੀਤਿਆ ਦੁਨੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਸੇ ਦਰਗਹ ਉਗਾਹਾ ॥ | p. 1383 |
| 40. | ਵੇਖਹੁ ਬੰਦਾ ਚਲਿਆ ਚਹੁ ਜਣਿਆ ਵੈ ਕੰਨਿ ॥<br>ਫਰੀਦਾ ਅਮਲ ਜਿ ਕੀਤੇ ਦੁਨੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਦਰਗਹ ਆਏ ਕੰਮਿ ॥                                                                                         | p. 1383 |

*Which is subjected to hard blows for a life of sin.<sup>41</sup>*

*Farid, hast thou noticed the bell beaten without blame ?  
What may then be the fate of us sinners ?<sup>42</sup>*

### NUPTIALS

Baba negates fear of death, and gives new meaning to it, seeing it as something to look forward to :

*Farid, the lowly grave makes call to homeless man  
To come to his real abode.  
Saying, come to me thou must; fear not death.<sup>43</sup>*

*This life is the bride, death the bridegroom  
Who will carry her away in wedlock.<sup>44</sup>*

Life, to him, is precious :

*My soul is weak : The Command of the Lord is hard to bear :  
And life's milk, once spilt, will be gathered no more.<sup>45</sup>*

And must, therefore, not be whiled away :

*Farid, how long this capering in thoughtless pleasure ?  
Wake to serve the Beloved.  
Thy few days of life are fast slipping by.<sup>46</sup>*

### On Narcissism

The new generation is obsessed with body image; beauty no longer remains a quality. Superficiality and artificiality have become normal traits. The natural look is looked down upon and considered backward. In contrast to the modern concept of beauty quantified into centimeters and grams, and confined to the young age by the Miss World / Miss Universe contests, Baba talks of beauty and youth as :

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 41. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਇਕਨਾ ਆਟਾ ਅਗਲਾ ਇਕਨਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਲੋਣੁ ॥<br>ਅਗੈ ਗਏ ਸਿੰਘਪਸਨਿ ਚੋਟਾਂ ਖਾਸੀ ਕਉਣੁ ॥                                   | p. 1380 |
| 42. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦਰਿ ਦਰਵਜ਼ੈ ਜਾਇ ਕੈ ਕਿਉਂ ਡਿੱਠੋਂ ਘੜੀਆਲੁ ॥<br>ਏਹੁ ਨਿਦੋਸਾਂ ਮਾਰੀਐ ਹਮ ਦੌਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਕਿਆ ਹਾਲੁ ॥                    | p. 1379 |
| 43. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਗੋਰ ਨਿਮਾਣੀ ਸਭ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਧਰਿਆ ਘਰਿ ਆਉ ॥<br>ਸਰਪਰ ਮੈਥੈ ਆਵਣਾ ਮਰਣੁ ਵਰੁ ਲੈ ਜਸੀ ਪਰਣਾਇ ॥                           | p. 1382 |
| 44. ਜਿੰਦ੍ਹ ਵਹੁਟੀ ਮਰਣੁ ਵਰੁ ਲੈ ਜਸੀ ਪਰਣਾਇ ॥<br>45. ਇਕ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਪਤਲੀ ਸਹ ਕਰੇ ਬੋਲਾ ॥<br>ਦੂਧਾ ਥਣੀ ਨ ਅਵਈ ਫਿਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਮੇਲਾ ॥ | p. 1377 |
| 46. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕੋਠੇ ਪੁਕਣੁ ਕੇਤਤਾ ਪਿਰ ਨੀਦੜੀ ਨਿਵਾਰਿ ॥<br>ਜੋ ਦਿਹ ਲਾਏ ਗਾਣਵੇ ਗਏ ਵਿਲਾੜਿ ਵਿਲਾੜਿ ॥                            | p. 794  |
|                                                                                                                 | p. 1380 |

*Man's life is like a gaily-decked female,  
Perfect in toilet and make-up in carefree sleep.  
In the end is gone the fragrance of musk,  
Odour of asafoetida alone remains.<sup>47</sup>*

*I fear not loss of youth, were not the Beloved's love lost;  
Many a youth has withered away for lack of love's  
Sustenance.<sup>48</sup>*

*Farid, I saw eyes that once captivated the world.  
Eyes that at one time would bear,  
Not a daub too bold of collyrium,  
Pecked at by birds.<sup>49</sup>*

*Saith Farid, in youth this life-female loved not the Lord;  
Grown in years, she died;  
In the grave her soul waileth; Lord, Thee I failed to meet.<sup>50</sup>*

*Ugliness, as per Baba, is :  
Listen Farid ! frightening are the faces of those  
Indifferent to the Lord's name;  
In this world would they suffer;  
Hereafter shall they not be honoured.<sup>51</sup>*

### Forthright

Baba Farid is very forceful and candid. Below are his views regarding those who are :

#### LATE RISERS

*Farid, though alive, art thou no better than dead.*

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| 47. | ਨਾਤੀ ਧੱਤੀ ਸੰਬਹੀ ਸੁਤੀ ਆਇ ਨਚਿੰਦੂ ॥<br>ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੁ ਬੇੜੀ ਹਿੰਡ ਦੀ ਗਈ ਕਥੂਰੀ ਗੰਧੁ ॥           | p. 1379 |
| 48. | ਜੋਬਨ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਨਾ ਫਰਾਂ ਜੇ ਸਹ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥<br>ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕਿਤੀ ਜੋਬਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੁਕਿ ਗਏ ਕੁਸਲਾਇ ॥ | p. 1379 |
| 49. | ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜਿਨ ਲੋਇਣ ਜਗੁ ਮੌਹਿਆ ਸੇ ਲੋਇਣ ਸੈ ਡਿਠੁ ॥<br>ਕਜਲ ਰੇਖ ਨ ਸਹਦਿਆ ਸੇ ਪੰਖੀ ਸੂਇ ਬਹਿਠੁ ॥       | p. 1378 |
| 50. | ਫਰੀਦਾ ਨੰਢੀ ਕੰਤੁ ਨ ਰਾਵਿਓ ਵੱਡੀ ਥੀ ਮੁਈਆਸੁ ॥<br>ਧਨ ਕੂਕੇਂਦੀ ਗੇਰ ਮੌਂ ਤੈ ਸਹ ਨਾ ਮਿਲੀਆਸੁ ॥       | p. 1380 |
| 51. | ਫਰੀਦਾ ਤਿਨ ਮੁਖ ਫਰਾਵਣੇ ਜਿਨਾ ਵਿਸਾਰਿਓਨੁ ਨਾਉ ॥<br>ਐਚੈ ਦੁਖ ਘਣੇਰਿਆ ਅਗੈ ਠਉਰ ਨ ਠਾਉ ॥             | p. 1383 |
| 52. | ਫਰੀਦਾ ਪਿਛਲ ਰਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਗਿਓਹਿ ਜੀਵਦੜੇ ਮੁਇਓਹਿ ॥<br>ਜੇ ਤੈ ਰਬੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿਆ ਤ ਰਬਿ ਨ ਵਿਸਰਿਓਹਿ ॥       | p. 1383 |

*Thou hast not arisen from sleep at dawn to pray.<sup>52</sup>*

#### SANS LONGING FOR GOD

*Sorrow of the Beloved's separation is the Lord of life.*

*Saith Farid: Like to the cremation-yard is the heart  
That knows not such sorrow.<sup>53</sup>*

#### WORLDLY

*Cursed is the life of those that have reposed hope  
In other than Him.<sup>54</sup>*

*Farid, thou shameless dog truant from prayer,  
Worthless is thy life's tenor:*

*Never hast thou come to the house of God to pray.<sup>55</sup>*

#### FORGETFUL OF GOD

*The true devotees – soaked in God's love  
Are ever in ecstasy of realisation;  
Those forgetful of the holy Name are a burden on earth.<sup>56</sup>*

#### NON-BELIEVERS

*Wake up betimes Farid ! Perform thy ablutions,  
Engage in prayer.*

*A head not bowing before the Lord merits being cut off.<sup>57</sup>  
What worth the head, obstinate in God-denial ?*

*Worthy such a head to burn under the pot, to be fuel to the Fire.<sup>58</sup>*

### Need of the Hour

Guru Nanak, the revolutionary founder of a new faith, Sikhism, in a period when both Muslims and Hindus had deviated from true religion, appreciated the intrinsic spiritual value of Baba's verses and preserved them. Such a far-sighted act has enabled the subsequent generations to relish Baba's soul-stirring expressions in their original form. But for the Guru, the renderings of a soul drenched in God's love would have been lost to the world. We are all well aware of the

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| 53. ਬਿਰਹਾ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਤੁ ਸਲਤਾਨੁ ॥<br>ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਤਨਿ ਬਿਰਹੁ ਨ ਉਪਜੈ ਸੋ ਤਨੁ ਜਾਣੁ ਮਸਾਨੁ ॥ | p. 1379 |
| 54. ਧਿਗੁ ਤਿਨ੍ਹ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਨਾ ਵਿਡਾਣੀ ਆਸ ॥                                                  | p. 1379 |
| 55. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਥੇ ਨਿਵਜਾ ਕੁਤਿਆ ਏਹ ਨ ਭਲੀ ਰੀਤਿ ॥<br>ਕਬਹੀ ਚਲਿ ਨ ਆਖਿਆ ਪੰਜੇ ਵਖਤ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥              | p. 1381 |
| 56. ਰਤੇ ਇਸਕ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਰੰਗ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਕੇ ॥<br>ਵਿਸਰਿਆ ਜਿਨ੍ਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇ ਭੁਏ ਭਾਰੁ ਥੀਏ ॥                   | p. 488  |
| 57. ਉਠੁ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਉਸੁ ਸਾਜਿ ਸੁਥਰ ਨਿਵਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਿ ॥<br>ਜੋ ਸਿਰੁ ਸਾਂਈ ਨਾ ਨਿਵੈ ਸੋ ਸਿਰੁ ਕਪਿ ਉਤਾਰਿ ॥     | p. 1381 |
| 58. ਜੋ ਸਿਰੁ ਸਾਂਈ ਨਾ ਨਿਵੈ ਸੋ ਸਿਰੁ ਕੀਜੈ ਕਾਇ ॥<br>ਕੁਨੇ ਹੋਠਿ ਜਲਈਐ ਬਾਲਣ ਸੰਦੇ ਥਾਇ ॥             | p. 1381 |

contradictory stories associated with Baba's date of birth and death, life, honorific name, etc., for want of authentic recording.

Unfortunately, the coming generations may indeed not be able to enjoy the real import of Baba's writings, if not conversant with Punjabi language – and there is every likelihood that they will not be. Translations can only get close to the original meaning, and that too, only if done from the original text. Translations from a translated text can distort the meaning.

The modern Punjabi denizen, under the influence of globalisation and slavish mentality, prefers not to teach Punjabi language to his children, considering it somehow to be an inferior language. This trend is catastrophic to preserving the cultural heritage, dating centuries back.

The new revolution brought in by the Information Technology is being exploited to capture the very minds of the people the world over. If we are not alert, and unable to maintain our thinking ability independent of foreign influences, we will be swept off by this giant wave. Our very culture, identity, value-system are at stake. The new technologies must be harnessed to our advantage; we must not get enslaved by these.

The attitude of consuming as much as possible is depleting our natural resources and adding pollutants to our soil, air and water. The end result is environmental hazards that man faces today. Unless taken serious note of and some corrective measures adopted, our children and grandchildren will be the ones to pay the price for our shortsightedness. If only man could imbibe the concept of living a simple life, our planet would be much healthier.

It is certain that with the speed and direction in which the world is moving, we will one day need to go back to the wisdom and vision of saints like Baba Sheikh Farid.

*Listen, Sheikh Farid ! Union with Allah,  
May immediately come about,  
Shouldst thou restrain,  
The cries of these cranes of desire,  
Frisking about in thy mind.  
Shouldst one realise, death is inescapable,  
After which no return occurs,  
One wouldest love not the false world,  
To lose the merit of this life.<sup>59</sup>*

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59. ਆਜੁ ਮਿਲਾਵਾ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਟਾਕਿਮ ਕੁੰਜੜੀਆ ਮਨਹੁ ਮਚਿੰਦੜੀਆ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਜੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਘੁਸਿ ਨ ਆਈਐ ॥  
ਝੂਠੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਲਗਿ ਨ ਆਪੁ ਵਵਾਈਐ ॥

## EFFICACY OF PRAYER

GAJINDER SINGH\*

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In Guru Granth Sahib, the following verse by Bhagat Dhanna *ji* is perhaps, a most bold and mundane prayer seeking all items of comfort.

*Lord! Thy servant am I in affliction.  
Those that to Thee are devoted, Thou their objectives dost fulfil.  
I beg for lentils, flour and some ghee,  
Whereby may my heart be delighted.  
Seek I also shoes and good clothing,  
And grain grown over well-ploughed land.  
A cow and buffalo in milk I seek,  
As also a good Arab mare.  
Thy servant Dhanna then begs also for a wife, a good housekeeper.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 695

It is a prayer in which a Sikh may beseech Lord to give him daily sustenance. Of course, it is a prayer seeking worldly comforts and has been selected for inclusion in Guru Granth Sahib. The key to it is that it is right for God's disciples to seek any boons. Another assertion by the Guru is as follows :

*As a son or devotee the holy Preceptor serves,  
Fulfilled are all his objectives,  
All his heart's desires fulfilled.  
Should he to the Master dedicate progeny, property, wealth,  
The Master conducting him to the Lord,  
Liberation to him shall bring.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 307

Every one prays and gets heartened by mere supplication to the Deity. Prayer is a universal, psychological remedy for nervous, flustered, ruffled tempers, and soothes the nerves. It is resorted to in

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situations of anger, fear, longing, greed, lust, and even revenge. In some instances, it may express gratitude for favours granted.

During crisis and calamity, even atheists cannot refrain from prayers although later they may call it a momentary lapse, a weakness of character. But mind has its own behaviour pattern, unsullied by one's known convictions and view-point. Call it conscience or sub-consciousness or by any other psychic jargon, yet the fact remains that a time comes in one's life when one finds matters out of one's reach and control, and one yields to temptation for a guiding hand, a sense of protection and a wish to stoically bear the lonely chasm.

Prayers can be individual or congregational. Whereas Muslims prefer congregational prayers, they also have direct communion with Lord. The formal or official prayer is *Namaz*, five times a day and one more for the devout at midnight too, standardised and rigidly enforced with genuflection, bends and bows. Guru Nanak found the *Mullah* and the flock mechanically mouthing the text and bending without understanding the purport of prayer or concentrating on God-head. Guru remarked:

*Not by mere chatter does one attain paradise;  
By truthful acting comes forgiveness.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p.141

*Brahmins, pedagogues and astrologers perpetually study Puranas;  
These realize not the Divine object lying within.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p.419

Prayer has different definitions. About Hindu rituals and ceremonies, Guru was wholly unconvinced about their merit. In *Raag Maru*, he paints a picture of such efforts :

*Man's mind is a poison-laden ship, tossed into the ocean –  
Invisible its shore, floating in the midst of waters.*

*Neither is there oar in hand,  
Nor is there a pilot in the terrible sea of water.  
Friend ! the world in a mighty snare is caught.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1009

Guru depicted in detail the Hindu practices' inadequacy and gave solutions as under:

*Some to forests repair, and send not back an echo;  
Others bear cold frost, frozen water and ice;  
Still others smear ashes over the body, washing not their filth.*

*Some there are that bear matted locks, fearful of aspect,  
And ruin their homes.  
Others wander about nude day and night,  
And sleep not a wink.  
Some expose their limbs to burning flames, tormenting themselves;  
Without devotion, with ashes on the limbs –  
What good all their wailing ?  
Only by serving the holy Preceptor  
Would they shine in splendour at the Portal Divine.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1284

In Hindu systems, congregational prayer does not exist. It is not approved, as each individual is psychologically a different mind-set and identity. Each case has to be dealt with separately, in accordance with its intellectual status. In temples, each person prays for his own requirements. Others present their pray by turns. A congregation may consist of people belonging to different *varnas*, each with its own *dharma* enjoined by Manu, and their mixing together may not be homogenous in *yagna, hom or aradhna*. Hinduism in any format is individualistic in nature. Hindu practices did not impress Guru Nanak, as *yagna, hom, aradhna, archa, puja, vandna* are all directed to gain supernatural powers, for personal gains, *ridhis* and *sidhis*, but do not lead to spiritual headway. Too much *tantric* magic is mixed up in Hindu precepts.

Like the advice to Hindus, Guru said to others :  
*Not by idle chatter is enlightenment obtained:  
Hard as steel is its discourse.  
By Divine grace alone is it obtained  
All clever devices and force bring only ignominy.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p.. 465

Prayers cater to wide range of supplicant's wishes, from daily small needs to cherished life-long objectives. They are a vehicle to get personal gains even at the cost of others. Refer to countries at war praying *en masse* for destruction of each other, or even individuals resorting to prayer to damage others' business or lives. There are *mantras* and amulets for achieving such nefarious ends recommended in some religious systems. The prayers are offered for expanding ego and reek of lust and levity.

The whole ritualism pushes aside man's acceptance of God as the

Doer, rather it expands his own ego. Such a prayer at best is man's quest for improving his own lot, beseeching a Deity to yield to his own fancy and whims, which accumulate without end.

There are instances in history, when Muslim *faqirs* undertook *chaliha* to destroy cities, like the one at Sailkot, invoking spiritual powers. Vedic *mantras* for vanquishing enemy were in use for long. Guru Nanak refers to such efforts in *Babar-vani* :

*No Mughal by such spells was struck blind;  
None by their spells was affected.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 418

A Sikh, on the other hand, prays for fusion with God, totally accepting His Will. This is the bed-rock on which Sikhism is based. When he prays, he asks for the well-being of all, and not confining it to himself. In fact, when you accept God as the Doer, with the avowed aim in life to do according to his Will, there is no place for a different prayer. Taking this as the basic mind-set, a prayer becomes a humble request for the Lord to accede to or not. Sikh does not demur.

Sikhs pray, and perhaps more often than any other sect or community. Sikh prayer is a request and supplication. It is called *Ardas*; *Arz dasht* in Persian means supplication, which is the source of the word. A Sikh leaves it at that, and abides by God's Will. Sikh prayer is not in the nature of appeal, nor entreaty, nor invocation or even craving, as all of that transforms a prayer to a clamour, a moan of imploration, a demand.

Others may worship and glorify a deity primarily for personal favours, fortune, grant of wishes, and a charter of demands, but Sikh does not basically subscribe to it. No doubt, personal basic needs were asked for by *Bhagat Dhannaji* and it was accepted as suitable for Sikhs to adopt, Guru reminded the Sikh to stay within the Will of Lord. In *Gauri Sukhmani*, in Canto 5, this point has been raised:

*Were God to withhold that one and withdraw also the other ten.  
Then thoughtless man ! what const then do?  
To the Lord with whom our strength prevails not,  
Ever should you pay homage.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p.268

It is also advised that :

*Whosoever to obedience of His ordinance He inspires,  
Saith Nanak, all blessings shall obtain.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p.268

Ritualistic worship is also another variety of prayer. Formal prayers are necessary for community determination and strengthening the resolve. Sikhs also pray humbly in congregation. Seeking God's Grace and mercy is only a request for better intellect and high thinking. It should never be employed as a sure panacea for fulfilment of wishes. Guru counsels:

*Listen, man ! keep ever the Lord in mind,  
By whose grace thou dost enjoy numerous delights of the palate.  
By contemplating Him shalt thou attain the supreme state,  
By whose grace scented objects to thy limbs thou dost apply.  
Meditate ever on Him in thy mind,  
By whose grace thou in the house in joy dost abide.  
My tongue, day and night remember Him,  
By whose grace thou with thy family in joy dost live.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 269

It is a general belief among almost all religious orders that prayers are accepted and answered favourably, if the seeker prays reposing full faith in God. Our Revered Masters have emphasised that God is not the gift bearing genie of *Aladin's lamp*, bound to respond generously to any ruse like *Vedic mantras*, *Quranic surahs*, prayer wheels, austerities, a specific phrase from the Bible, because God acts at His pleasure. There cannot be any binding formula, method, procedure or stance to motivate God's blessings.

Sikhs holding *Akhand Paths*, or recitations of *Japu Ji Sahib, etc.*, are only imitating the *karm kand* of *Vedic mantras* therapy which in ancient times was believed to be panacea for all boons, as gods were harnessed to grant prayers. The efficacy of such measures became suspect in due course, and these were given up along with the Impersonal Brahm to Personal deities like Shiva and Vishnu, gradually replaced with *archa, puja, vandna*, even though the substance remained the same, to exhort Divine Powers to accede to these efforts. Muslims have staunch faith in the efficacy of amulets and written charms of specific stanzas from the *Quran*. Similarly, Bible reading is said to give devotees solace, and sustains belief in its healing powers.

It has to be understood that God has no such code of conduct and is not bound to *mantras, yantras, tantras*, even if these are dubbed as prayers. There are instances, where persons having prayed without positive results, revolted, in turn, abusing God, even denying His very existence. People have invented their theories and imposed them in

temples and prayer halls for God to obey!

Whereas God has established rule of discipline in the Universe, and Nature follows the set routines, God Himself is beyond explanations. In the basic definition of God, Guru Nanak has used the expression '*nirbhau*', which is usually taken to mean as 'without fear'. Pray, fear of what, when there is no one besides God? *Bhau* here suggests that there is no limit restraining God in His vision and capabilities, whereas His creation is.

In Guru Granth Sahib, instances from *puranic* tales have been quoted where man and animal received indiscriminate favours from Almighty even where faith was not involved, like salvation to the father who named his son as *Narayan* and called his name in the routine course, or the elephant rescued while being swept by an octopus. The purpose of these similes is to illustrate that God's bounty is free for all and not restricted only to those who praise Him and pray for His gratuity.

*a) By listening to the narrative of the holy*

*The mind to repetition of the Name is devoted.*

*Ajamal by uttering God's Name once only was saved.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p.1192

*b) The courtesan Ganika was saved as her parrot uttered God's name.*

*The elephant on the Lord meditated, and by Him was saved.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 537

It may be a point to ponder whether a prayer is at all necessary, as God acts at His pleasure, where and when He may confer His bounties. Since all manifestation is of God, the small ego of a creature of God, who may take upon himself the cudgels to entrance God either by prayers, austerities or his egoistic good deeds, may not bear boons. God sends rain and sunshine as well as cyclones and earthquakes to all equally, without distinction of man's record sheet, if ever there was one, or whether they believe in His existence or not.

*In an instant a pauper He makes a king,*

*And a king a pauper.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 537

*Such effort nothing to His sum adds,*

*Nor from it aught detracts.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 9

*Neither is He installed in temples,*

*Nor fashioned by skill;*

*He the Immaculate is self-existent.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 2

The man in the street will continue to subscribe to such fanciful projections of religious missionaries of all established systems, who take him for a ride due to the dark recesses of his *limited* view, to exploit him for securing brute majority or significant minority status in the nefarious power game of politics. The common man has to understand that he has to develop his faculties for a cleaner environment, a peaceful society, a happy good natured family and to give a chance to the future generations to improve and prosper.

In training courses of Human Development Programmes, stress is put on fixing correct priorities so that the most urgent and valuable issues get top preference at anyone time, out of the long list of an individual's pending matters. A person so trained, develops *skills* for creating a correct action plan, based upon a scientific and logical segregation of pre-plan systemization. This sharpens the intellect and becomes a life-long habit of result-oriented ability to separate grain from chaff, by better utilisation of energy and opportunities.

Guru Granth Sahib repeatedly counsels the Sikhs to use their energies for gainful pursuits, pointing to cleansing effect of *Naam*, instead of wasting zeal and ardour on petty matters.

A common man lives life as it comes. He neither plans for top scores nor can he pick out priorities. Instead, he plays the super-natural card, an easy way out for the idle and slovenly to pray for winning a game of cards, a race, a favourable glance from the beloved, a hearty meal, a cold breeze and an evening of pleasures. If such a person is taught to place his preferences, as to what could be his order of precedence in life, on which he should invest his energies, it could clearly mark his direction of activity.

*Thy life purposelessly is passing.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1352

*Ignorant man ! why this sleep ? wake up !*

*Life is this world, thinkst thou, is eternal.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 794

*To those carry false wars, who may joy come ?*

*In false dealing, mind and body both true false.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 18

The Sikhs work towards the objective of totally erasing mundane wishes, as a Sikh's identity is merged in the Guru's, and the mere presence of Guru is enough for the lover in the Sikh to be totally satiated. Prayer in such a case, if at all, would be only to remain in touch with

the Primal Person.

In Sufis, the final stage of meditation is annihilation of Self. When there is no Self left in an individual, he becomes a part of the Eternal God. This is also the stand of Sri Krishna in *Gita*, where he calls himself as the pervading god in action, because the veil between God and Self is finally rent asunder. In such a case where the individuality is erased, of course, there cannot be any wishes left for fulfilment. Thus, it is the stage of a person's spiritual awakening, which decides the range of his desires and wishes to be accomplished and of the prayers' efficacy.

In the final analysis, the world is what man makes of it; either a peaceful place to live in and prosper, or, a hellhole to destroy his progeny.

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## CHARLES WILKINS ON SIKH CEREMONIES

KIRPAL SINGH\*

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Charles Wilkins was one of the pioneering Orientalists of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Born in 1749 AD, Wilkins joined service of the East India Company at the age of twenty. He suggested to the Governor General Warren Hastings, to establish printing press in 1778. Wilkins translated *Manusmriti*, *Mahabharata*, and *Hitopdesh*, and the later years of his life were devoted to the revision of *Richardson's Dictionary* Persian, Arabic and English. He died in 1836 in England.

Charles Wilkins was one of the earliest Europeans to write about the Sikhs. He wrote on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1781, "Before I left Calcutta, a gentleman with whom I chanced to be discoursing of that sect of people who are distinguished from worshippers of Brahm and followers of the Mohomed by the appellation *Seek* (Sikh), informed me that there was a considerable number of them settled in the city of Patna." Since he was proceeding on leave to Benaris he stopped at Patna. Following are his observations:

"I found the college of the *Seeks* situated in one of the narrow streets of Patna, at no very considerable distance from the Custom-house. I was permitted to enter the outward gate; but as soon as I came to the steps which led up into the Chapel, or public hall, I was civilly accosted by two of the Society, I asked them if I might ascend into the hall. They said it was a place of worship open to me and to all men; but at the same time, intimated that I must take off my shoes. I did not hesitate to comply, and I was then politely conducted into the hall, and seated upon a carpet, in the midst of the assembly, which was so numerous as almost to fill the room.

### The Congregation

"The congregation arranged themselves upon the carpet, on each side of the hall, so as to leave a space before the altar from end to end.

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The great book, was brought, with some little ceremony from the altar, and placed at the opposite extremity of the hall. An old man, with a revered silver beard, kneeled down before the desk with his face towards the altar; and on one side of him sat a man with a small drum, and two or three with cymbals. The book was now opened, and the old man began to chant to the tune of the drum and the cymbals; and, at the conclusion of every verse, most of the congregation joined chorus in a response, with countenances exhibiting great marks of joy. Their tones were by no means harsh; the time was quick; and I learnt that the subject was a Hymn in praise of the unity, the omnipresence, and the omnipotence of the Deity. I was singularly delighted with the gestures of the old man: I never saw a countenance so expressive of infelt joy, whilst he turned about from one to another, as it were, bespeaking their assents to those truths which his very soul seemed to be engaged in chanting forth. The hymn being concluded, which consisted of about twenty verses, the whole congregation got up, and presented their faces with joined hands towards the altar, in the attitude of prayer. A young man now stood forth; and, with a loud voice and distinct accent, solemnly pronounced a long prayer, or kind of liturgy, at certain periods of which all the people joined in a general response, saying Wa Gooroo. They prayed against temptation; for grace to do good; for the general good of mankind; and a particular blessing to the Seekers; and for the safety of those who at that time were on their travels. This prayer was followed by a short blessing from the old man, and an invitation to the assembly to partake of a friendly feast. The book was then closed and restored to its place at the altar."

### **The Holy Pudding**

"The two men entered bearing a large iron cauldron, called a *curray* (*karahi*), just taken from the fire, and placed it in the center of the hall upon a low stool. These were followed by others with five or six dishes, some of which were of silver, and a large pile of leaves sewed together with fibres, in the form of plates. One of these plates was given to each of the company without distinction; and the dishes being filled from the cauldron, their contents were served out till every one had got his share. My self was not forgotten; and, as I was resolved not to give them the smallest occasion for offence, I ate up my portion. It was a kind of sweetmeat, of the consistency of soft brown sugar, composed of flour and sugar mixed up with clarified butter, which is called *ghee*. Had not the *ghee* been rancid, I should have relished it

better. We were next served with a few sugar plums, and here ended the feast and the ceremonies of the day. They told me the religious part of the ceremony was daily repeated five times."

### Sikh Tenets

"In the course of the conversation I was engaged in with the two *Seeks* before the service, I was able to gather the following circumstances. That the founder of their faith was called Naneek Sah, who flourished about four hundred years ago at Punjab, and who earlier, was a Hindoo of the Kshetry, or military tribe; and that his body disappeared as the Hindoos and the Mussulmans were disputing for it; for upon their removing the cloth which covered it, it was gone; that he left behind him a book, composed by himself in verse, and the language of Punjab (but a character partly of his own invention) which teaches the doctrines of the faith he had established. That they call this character, in honour of their founder, Gooroo-Mookhee; from the mouth of the preceptor; that this book, of which that standing near the altar, and several others in the hall, were copies, teaches that there is but one God, omnipotent and omnipresent; filling all space, and pervading all matter; and that he is to be worshipped and invoked. That there will be a day of retribution, when virtue will be rewarded and vice punished; (I forgot to ask in what manner.) That it not only Commends universal toleration, but forbids disputes with those of another persuasion. That it forbids murder, theft, and such other deeds as are, by the majority of mankind, esteemed crimes against society; and inculcates the practice of all the virtues, but particularly an universal philanthropy, and I next inquired why they were called *Seeks*, and they told me it was a word borrowed from one of the commandments of their founder, which signifies 'learn thou', and that it was adopted to distinguish the sect."

### Sikh Ceremonies

"I asked them what were the ceremonies used in admitting a proselyte. A person having shown a sincere inclination to renounce his former opinions, to any five or more *Seeks* assembled together, in any place, as well on the highway as in a house of worship, they send to the first shop where sweetmeats are sold, and procure a small quantity of a particular sort, which is very common, and as I re-collect, they call Batasa(*Patasa*); and having diluted it in pure water, they sprinkle some of it on the body, and into the eyes of the convert; whilst one of the best instructed repeats to him, in any language with which he is conversant,

the chief canons of their faith, exacting from him a solemn promise to abide by them the rest of his life. They offered to admit me into their society, but I declined the honor; contending myself with the alphabet, which they told me to guard as the apple of my eye, as it was a sacred character. I find it differs but little from the Devnagri; the number, order, and powers, of the letters are exactly the same. The language itself is a mixture of Persian, Arabic, and some Sanskrit, grafted upon the provincial dialect of Punjab, which is a kind of Hindooee.”

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*Saith Nanak : Fall not into anxiety; this on Himself He takes—  
 Creatures bred in water too are by Him given sustenance.  
 There neither run shops nor are fields sown;  
 Neither selling nor buying is there done;  
 Other creatures He provides to be sustenance of some.  
 Those in the ocean living too, are by Him looked after.  
 Saith Nanak : Fall not into anxiety; this on Himself He takes.*

— Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 955

ਨਾਨਕ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਤਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਤਿਸ ਹੀ ਹੋਇ ॥  
 ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਜੰਤ ਉਪਾਇਅਨੁ ਤਿਨਾ ਭਿ ਰੋਜੀ ਦੇਇ ॥  
 ਓਥੈ ਹਟੁ ਨ ਚਲਈ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਕਿਰਸ ਕਰੇਇ ॥  
 ਸਉਦਾ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਲਏ ਨ ਦੇਇ ॥  
 ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਆਹਾਰੁ ਜੀਅ ਖਾਣਾ ਏਹੁ ਕਰੇਇ ॥  
 ਵਿਚਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਸਾਇਰਾ ਤਿਨਾ ਭਿ ਸਾਰ ਕਰੇਇ ॥  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਤਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਤਿਸ ਹੀ ਹੋਇ ॥

## GURU GRANTH SAHIB – THE BESTOWER OF BLISS

BHAGWANT SINGH DALAWARI\*

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While I am naturally proud of the exalted opinions about my Guru, Guru Granth Sahib, by distinguished personalities of the world, I ask myself: Do I display in my life the qualities of a universal human being as envisaged in Guru Granth Sahib? To me, Guru Granth Sahib, as the common heritage of all mankind, is the ultimate yardstick to measure my own character. And, incidentally, the Guru himself details the qualifications of a Guru. I am pleased to note that Guru Granth Sahib meets all the distinguishing features of a perfect Guru. And Guru Gobind Singh declared that the Word in the Scripture, whether it represents the messages of six Sikh Gurus or of the sacred *sants* and *bhagats*, would be our perpetual Guru in the form of Guru Granth Sahib from 1708.

But can I relish the bliss, the *anand* that I refer to in the title of this article without living the dictates of the Master or tasting the nectar that pours out from obedience? They say that the proof of the pudding is in eating. We are all aware of the majesty of our Guru whom Arnold Toynbee calls “The mankind’s spiritual treasure” and recommends that “it should be brought within the direct reach of as many people as possible”. But can we deny that we have venerated the Holy Scripture in a demonstratively perfect manner, we have covered it with the most wonderful fineries and we have placed our Guru in the most splendid gurdwaras and have even provided air-conditioners and heaters to “ensure the comfort(?)”, without really understanding it and spreading its message through our personal life, our personal character?

Prof (Bhai) Harbans Lal under *God’s Gift to Humanity* rightly stresses that “those of us who are behind in understanding the Guru must endeavour to not only catch up but also significantly advance themselves... Signs of advancement are when organisation of religion is less important than the truth it propagates, when guards are less

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\* Tapovan, Amravati, Maharashtra

important than the treasures they are guarding and, finally, when prescription paper is less revered than the taking of medicine it prescribes. Let us make these advances a great reality."

The purpose of my article is to show and experience the truth of the declarations made in the following *sabad*.

*Satguru is the one by meeting whom one lands in bliss. The duality of the mind vanishes and one receives the ultimate berth in the Lord's Court. By which means can I meet my loving Satguru? How do I meet my perfect Guru ? And the Guru stressed that I must remain in ceaseless devotion and listen to the songs of devotion. I shall then remain always attached to the Guru. And I shall never experience wants, while I shall always gain profits. The one whose heart is enlightened and he is free from entanglements of duality, says Nanak, will be elevated through Guru's grace and shall remain engaged in ceaseless praise of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>*

When I was 20 years old (I am now 73) I had written an article in the *Spokesman*, New Delhi on *The Realities of Sikhism*, dwelling on the need to live the dictates of our Masters. I had said Guru Gobind Singh was of course great – and he needs no certificates from us that he was so – but we shall become great only when we actually practise his commands in our daily life. Otherwise it would just be like saying *Pidram Sultan Bood* – My Father was a king. I face the same situation today. God has provided for me platforms for speaking, writing, preaching and spreading the reality of Guru Granth Sahib. Every Seminar I attend, every conference in which I participate, every inter-faith dialogue that I join tells me that we go on parading the truths already known, stressing the realities already acknowledged. However, we rarely go into the question why, despite such clear message of universal love, we continue to live in caste- discrimination, concepts of high and low, difference between one gurdwara and the other and, above all, highly provocative altercations even in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. It is obvious that we have not imbibed the spirit of our scripture and have only shown external veneration.

That Guru Granth Sahib is the perfect Guru in terms of the *sabad* that I have detailed in English above, is amply proved by my own experience which I shall relate presently. We should pay attention to the core, not the shell.

When I was in Conakry, the capital of a west African state, Guinea, I was struck with depression which lasted two years from 1968- 1970,

but what I personally experienced during the night-long *kirtan* of Guru's *sabads* on 10th-11th October 1970, was the total efficacy of the Guru's word. Around 2 AM on 11th October, a hymn was sung which completely overhauled me. And I can personally vouchsafe that the bliss, I experienced at that moment, convinced me that Guru Granth Sahib was the perfect Guru. This bliss has never diminished except when, knowingly or unknowingly, I have violated Guru's command. I have often said that slavery of Guru Granth Sahib is the greatest liberation on Earth. And the slavery means living what the Guru commands. I have tried to mould my life according to the dictates of Guru Granth Sahib and have often experienced the truth of Gurbani. Indeed I cannot claim that 'I' have done anything, I am sure the Guru has seen to it that I never falter in believing that truth of his word guides my path.

We shall certainly be happy and pleased to spread the message of our Guru and shall be satisfied that we have done our job. But that will not enrich our life unless, we live the commands. Says Bhai Gurdas :

*How shall we go to the Lord's court merely by talking, if we ask about the way but do not take that path? If we consult the doctor but do not take the prescribed medicine in the prescribed regime, how can we get rid of the disease? If we consult a Gurmukh (a Suhagin) but live the life of a Manmukh (Duhagin) and live in adultery at heart, how can we ask our Lord to come to us? And, merely by singing hymns, listening to sermons or closing our eyes, we cannot achieve self-realisation unless we hold on to the teaching of the Guru and live it in day-to-day life.<sup>2</sup>*

Let me now take some *sabads* which demonstratively prove not only the truth of the Guru's word but also has produced the envisaged results in the formation of my character. Ever since my path changed on 10th October, 1970, I have never had the feeling of being unprotected or having any wants unfulfilled. On the contrary, these 34 years have been of such magnificent satisfaction that I adore the Guru's word and I find that every word of Guru Granth Sahib is my experienced truth gleaned from own life or from the life of my companions:

*We are very rich because with good fortune we have received God's name, because in equanimity we sing the Lord's praises..... And with the wealth of Naam, I eat and spend but never feel any want. On the contrary in stead of my wealth decreasing, I find that my wealth goes on increasing.<sup>3</sup>*

When I returned from Paris in 1976, my Guru had planted a seed

in my heart that immersion in *naam* must be translated into service of humanity and my Guru, Guru Granth Sahib, so arranged my life that after a course of training in leprosy work, I should install myself at the feet of leprosy patients, live in utter poverty and sing the Lord's praises in *sahaj*. This voluntary poverty, at one time, entailed that I should live on Rs. 100/- a month, out of which I should pay Rs. 50/- for food and manage everything with Rs. 50/-. I had left all that I had or I could have to my wife, but today after a life spent in the service of leprosy patients in devotion to God, He has enabled me to donate lakhs of rupees every year by bestowing on me two awards of Rs. One lakh each, and by creating Guru Granth Sahib Charitable Society with these amounts. Earlier I had only my wife and two children, who now live in America, now I have hundreds of relations to call my own. I received love only from a few near ones, now I am drowned in love of people everywhere. That is why I literally feel:

*The all-pervading Lord becomes the friend of an individual.  
What want can he ever have?<sup>4</sup>*

Guru Granth Sahib is not only my living Guru in thought, word and deed but I believe that no person could ever be so caring, so loving and so considerate. The beauty of this Guru is that he overhauls our soul and makes us so clean that we ourselves can feel the presence of the Lord. Savour this :

*The Lord shows himself very close to his devotee and whatever  
the devotee asks his master, it is provided at once.<sup>5</sup>*

This is my everyday experience. Knowing the Lord's graciousness I have never felt the need of asking Him to do anything for me. Nor have I ever begged for anything material since 1970. But the wonder is that there is nothing at all that which I needed and has not been available to me. In fact I have been saying for 33 years that every instant of my life today is better than the entire 40 years spent in luxury until 1970.

Another thing which shames me into self-annihilation is His abundant grace, undeserved love and ceaseless protection. I am always ashamed of my sins, but He not only conceals my sins but lets me enjoy His love, despite my shame.

*The Lord puts a screen on the devotee's misdeeds and He  
protects him without fail.<sup>6</sup>*

When Guru Gobind Singh bestowed Guruship on Guru Granth Sahib in 1708, the idea was that the 'light' which shone through the Word would remove our ignorance and enlighten our hearts. It will guide us to be lived as devoted householders spreading light and happiness to the world and leading a life of piety and devotion. We

literally treat Guru Granth Sahib as *Pargat Guran ki Deh*. Thus we have, on the one hand, deprived ourselves of the perpetual light guiding our steps and, on the other, wallowed in darkness created by our ignorance compounded by the satisfaction of our external *Karam-Kand* type of devotion. That is why, even the clear injunctions do not reach our heart.

*Remember the Lord otherwise you will repent.<sup>7</sup>*

*When my mind became as pure as Gangajal,  
The Lord followed me calling me Kabir, Kabir.<sup>8</sup>*

I happen to visit the various kinds of people in my work both of assistance to leprosy patients as also of spreading the majesty of Lord's message, I find even millionaires seething in pain and distress because of their alienation from God. And yet they do not listen to the Word although they bow before Guru Granth Sahib. Nor do they understand the significance of how God's name cleanses the heart and even God likes to associate with such people, because God, we are told, is Love, is Truth, is Purity.

It is not the parading of religion or religious texts that is the magnificent requirement of adherence to the Guru but implementing the injunctions of the Guru in our life. I have had two lives, one before 1970 of 40 years and the other after 1970 of 33 years. I witness myself the world of difference between what I thought, I did and I said then and how I function now. Let us look at the following words of the Guru :

*In the company of the holy, i.e. Sadh-sangat, the mind sleeping in maya wakes up and says Nanak, the Lord becomes sweet company.<sup>9</sup>*

In the same *sabad*, the following verses give a practical demonstration of what happens when one lives the word :

*The lowly person whom no one knows, is recognized throughout the world, when he recites the Lord's name.<sup>10</sup>*

We know ourselves the truth of the message. Nam Dev in Guru Granth Sahib himself says that when, in a mood of pleasureful devotion, he came to the Lord's temple, he was made to get out by the haughty Pandits. But he found that when the Lord showed his grace by changing the facade of the temple by letting Nam Dev stay inside and throwing away the haughty ones outside. We all also know that the so-called low-caste Bhagat Nam Dev of Maharashtra, who experienced this kind of humiliation once is now installed in Guru Granth Sahib and wherever, in the world, the Sikhs have their Guru in their homes, temples, schools, Nam Dev also shines like a divine star.

The word-Guru is not required to be venerated only externally because there would be no change within then. But witness this hymn

and live it, you will find yourself serene, calm and full of love:

*I have looked around the whole world, except for the One, The Lord, there is no one else. My friend Lord, comes to me face to face so that my mind and body become loving and serene.<sup>11</sup>*

I deliberately chose the heading of this article to discuss, deliberate and conclude that the beauty of our Master lies in internal changes for the better if we listen to the Word. It is a matter of great pride, great gratitude and great delight that the more I try to live the Word, the more bliss I feel. In fact, I am pleased to share an anecdote of Jamshedpur, where I had gone for Gurmat lectures. One day, a little boy, hesitant to come forward, was goaded by his mother to ask a question. In his childlike innocence, the boy of 7 years, asked me in a whisper,

"Why is God not seen?"

It was of course difficult to answer a child of 7 because he would not understand arguments. The thought struck me to ask him thus:

"Does your mother love you?"

"Yes".

"Does she love you very much?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then, please show me the box in which you have placed this love."

The boy laughed heartily. Then I added, "You know that your mother loves you and you feel it but you can neither see it yourself nor show it to me." It is exactly the same, with the Lord, "I know He is there, He loves me and I feel the love but can not show it."

In conclusion, let me share the experienced truth of the exalted enthralling hymn of Guru Arjun, not only to plead to my fellow Sikhs to relish the bliss by living the Word but also to feel the delight again:

ਜਾ ਤੂ ਮੇਰੈ ਵਲਿ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਆ ਮਹੁੰਦਾ ॥.....

I shall deal with the whole *sabad* in translation and discuss how the slavery of Guru Granth Sahib liberated me by my own feelings. The Guru says:

*When you are on my side, my Lord, what want can I have? You have handed over everything to me when I have become your slave. I find that there is no dearth of money, even when I spend, I eat and there is still a lot of it left with me. All the creation is at my service. And even my enemies have become my friends, no one wishes me ill. No one now asks me to give*

*an account of my deeds when, You Lord, have forgiven me. I am now in perfect peace and bliss because I have met my Guru and my God. All my tasks are accomplished well because I am blessed by You.<sup>12</sup>*

Guru Arjun, the compiler of the Granth, is my Master and I am his slave. In my own life, I have met exactly the same feelings. And I reiterate that the slavery of Guru Granth Sahib is the greatest liberation. That is why I say, Guru Granth Sahib is the perfect Guru on meeting whom one really gets into and remains in perpetual bliss.

Live the Word-Guru and feel the love.

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INHIBITING SPIRITUAL ENERGIES – FRENCH STYLE

GURDIP SINGH*

The French Government's proposed prohibitive injunctions regarding the religious symbols are a socially retrograde step, specially in the context of multi-cultural global society. While the adherence to civic norms of a modern pluralistic society cannot be questioned, the curbs on freedom to profess a religion, in all its manifestations, is akin to savagely severe repression of religion by Communist regimes.

The religious symbols harbour deified consciousness, and consequentially, are a cultural conditioning and tradition nurtured by a community. The religious symbols have their own essence of holiness in the psyche of the faithfuls. Therefore, the suppression of religious symbols is not only violation of a fundamental human right but is a psychological asphyxiation of human beings.

In the evolutionary process, the awareness of symbols has been the imaginative characteristic of humans from the very beginning of history. '*Homo erectus*', conscious of his situation in the Universe, was '*Homo symbolicus*'. The elements of nature symbolized mysterious powers from the earliest animistic stage of religious consciousness. The prowess of religious symbols relevant to religious sense can be best illustrated through a quote from *The Origins of Religions* by Julien Ries. Under the heading "Homo Religiosus and Symbolic Language". (page 122; 1994 Edition) the author states, "Thanks to the anthropological development that produces an incessant exchange at the imaginary level between man's psychic life and the external impulses deriving from the cosmos, *Homo sapiens* continues to grow. This is the secret of man's growth in the course of history. The world communicates with him through symbols, revealing aspects of reality that are not in themselves evident. This observation can help us clarify the role of symbolic language in the experience of the sacred". The author further states, (page 134; 1994 Edition) "In other words they

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(symbols as archetypes) awaken the primordial impulses present in the individual and collective consciousness. Through its activity the symbol generates psychic forces, creating a link between the conscious and the subconscious mind. This means that the consciousness is fired to discover the primordial images from which it began. In Eliade's view, the archetype belief confers efficacy on human action, establishing a relationship between the interior and exterior worlds. This is how man's creative sense is born".

The basic religious sense, from the origin of the humanity, is innate in every man. Not only man's nature is ethnologically religious, his consciousness is endowed with abstractive and symbolic capacities. As such when we consider the *Homo religiosus* as given to an experience of the sacred, we cannot obliterate the human faculty of *Homo symbolicus* wherein the imagination creates sanctified perceptive relation of the invisible through the visible.

The constitutive phenomena of rites, symbols and beliefs have been essential elements in the development of religions from the animistic, polytheistic to monotheistic faiths. No doubt, the pathways of spirituality in the post-modern society are far less mythically based, however, as yet the mystic power of the symbol remains forcefully psychic. In the structure of religious thought, the hierophantic dimension of the symbol for communion with the numinous is sanctified. Common spiritual identity and collective emotions are rooted in the religious symbols of all major religions.

Specifically in the case of the Sikhs, unshorn hair alongwith turban, as a headdress, is an article of faith. These external symbols are sacred to the Sikhs, and are a signification of the divinely-bestowed heritage. Sikhism lays inviolable stress on the 'internal' and 'external' disciplines of life. The dictum of the Tenth and last Master of the Sikhs was: "Only he is my Sikh who adheres to the discipline, And (then) he is my Master and I his Sikh". Initiated Sikh (Khalsa) wearing ordained symbols as sacramental signs is an epitome of religious sanctity, value cultivated cultural ethos and community's manifested spirit of Saint-Soldier, with a mission of ultimate sacrifice for the cause of all-round social justice and welfare of humanity as a whole . It is in pursuit of such a non-exclusivist egalitarian ideology that the SIKH CORE GROUP objects to the proposed imposition of the ban on the religious symbols by the French Government. – NOT for the Sikhs alone but as a principle, for other communities as well.

Fortunately, the Sikhs have won quite a few favourable judgments in many progressive countries for their religious rights to adorn covenanted symbols. A classic judgment upholding the right of a Sikh

to wear the turban was given by a Judge in the USA, stating: "To be a Sikh is to wear the turban. It is as simple as that".

Admittedly, the post-modernist society cannot be religious in the same manner as in the bygone times of ancestors. It is also not that historical phase when the subjects adopted the religion of their monarch. However, it would be prudent to take note of the observations of Karen Armstrong contained in her book *The Battle for God*. The core theme of this book is that religious fundamentalism is a product of the threat perceived by the religionists when their religious expression appears to be assailed. The author proved this conceptualization by tracing the developments in movements of societies of Muslims, Judaism and Protestant Christians over the last five centuries. Referring to a specific issue of the colonial era and the introduction of Western Civilization, the author states (page 166; 2001 Edition), "Missionaries also lamented the catastrophic influence of the veil, which, they believed, buried a woman alive and reduced her to the status of a prisoner or a slave. It showed how greatly the people of Egypt needed the benevolent supervision of the Western colonialists". She adds further, "Not surprisingly, this sickly sycophancy inspired a backlash. Arab writers refused to accept this estimate of their society, and in the course of this heated debate the veil turned into a symbol of resistance to colonialism. And so it has remained. Many Muslims now consider the veil *de rigueur* for all women, and a sign of true Islam".

Religion is a social power. The egalitarian values of religions must be universally channelled for commonweal of humanity. Francis Fukuyama in his book *The Great Disruption* subtitled *Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order* states (page 278; 1999 Edition): "A return to religiosity is far more likely to take a more benign, decentralized form, in which religious belief is less an expression of dogma than of the community's existing norms and desire for order. In some respects, this has already started to happen in many parts of the United States. Instead of community arising as a by-product of rigid belief, people will come to belief because of their desire for community. In other words, people will return to religious tradition not necessarily because they accept truth of revelation, but precisely because the absence of community and the transience of social ties in the secular world make them hungry for ritual and cultural tradition (emphasis mine) . They will help the poor or their neighbors not because doctrine tells them they must, but because they want to serve their communities and find that faith-based organizations are the most effective ways of doing so".

Fukuyama postulates “return to religiosity” as well as qualifies it by “a more benign, decentralized form” stipulating it as a precondition for ‘reconstitution of social order’. Samuel P Huntington in his book *Clash of Civilizations* does not rule out the possibility of a NEW development of a civilization attractive and appealing enough to act as an ethical way of life for humanity to adopt.

The French Government’s excessive emphasis on secularism may be due to its earlier experiences. There had been a reaction against Catholicism’s dominance of the State before the French Revolution. Also the Church’s opposition to liberal values into the early part of the twentieth century was palpable.

It has been reported that John V Hanford, US Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, reacting against the present French move, had stated that students who wore visible religious symbol as heartfelt manifestations of their beliefs have a basic right that should be protected. Former US President Bill Clinton had once said that the Constitution “does not require children to leave their religion at the schoolhouse door”.*

The French Government’s sovereignty accords it the right to govern according to its domestic agenda (politically-yes, but not so culturally). Sovereign countries, around the world, are more or less an aggregate of religious, ethnic and cultural diversity. The diversity, which inheres amongst various collectivities of religious mores and individual conscience, cannot be simply stamped out by an executive order. The French Government must not lose sight that in the present global scene, for the issues that are intimately relevant to human life, there is terminal danger of oblique consequences with profound and radical effect in distant lands and communities. Therefore, rather than antagonise any religious denomination, it would be prudent statesmanship to mutate religious sentiments for cumulating the social capital. As such the French Government’s move for banning the religious symbols needs to be scrapped.

We hope that the people who raised the banner of ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’, inspired by great thinkers like Voltaire and Rousseau, and successfully carried through the historic French Revolution, will not be found wanting in upholding the religious rights of the people of all religions.



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GURU GOBIND SINGH – A WORLD LEADER AHEAD OF HIS TIMES –

JASWINDER SINGH*

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Nanak, was destined to complete the job of establishing Sikhism. The ethos of the Sikh faith enunciated by Guru Nanak, and strengthened and augmented by his eight successors, were finally brought to a self-surviving maturity by Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh accomplished a great deal in a short span of 42 years allotted to him by the Lord. He set seal to a practical discipline that must be followed by the Sikhs, and put in practical provisions, so that a non-believer gets filtered out. Many come back after having suffered the vagaries of life, and are welcomed back with open arms. He designed his Khalsa such as a single Sikh could face an army of a lakh and a quarter, undaunted. His creation of the Khalsa was a feat of remarkable insight. It was a pragmatic vision of an ideal man, which had a built-in mechanism of rising to highest echelons of human potential.

The world has produced innumerable individuals who have contributed an array of abstract ideas on ethics and social behaviour, but their ideas failed to click at the practical level. However, the ethos enunciated by Guru Gobind Singh has resulted in the birth of a nation, the Khalsa that has altered the course of history at every stage of its evolution.

Guru Gobind Singh's Mission

According to *Bachitar Natak*, the Guru was here to accomplish a task ordained to him by the Lord Himself.

*For this purpose, I was born
And this let all the virtuous understand,
To advance righteousness
To emancipate the good*

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And to destroy evil doers, root and branch.

– Bachittar Natak

In order to understand and appreciate his accomplishments, it is important to understand the times in which he was born and the assets he had inherited.

Indian scene at the time of Guru Gobind Singh's birth

India was being ruled by the most vicious of the Mughals, Aurengzeb. His motivation was to convert the entire Hindu population to Islam. His methods were chilling. Laws were enacted to demoralise the Hindus. They were not permitted to ride horses, and were forced to pay a special tax, called *jazia*. The Hindu places of worship were desecrated and destroyed, and forcible conversion into Islam was the official policy of the state. The Hindu purge was the norm, and much blood was spilling, so that Guru Teg Bahadur had to sacrifice himself.

The Hindu population was completely demoralised, and had suffered at the hands of a series of Muslim invaders for well over six centuries. Its own in-built excesses inherited from Manu's doctrine of supremacy of the Brahmin and the inhuman repression of the lower castes, had already reduced the majority of the remaining population to a life of degraded existence. These people had got used to bear any injustice without any protest. No wonder the Muslim invaders had a field day of plunder, murder and abuse of the women community.

Guru Gobind Singh decided to pull this demoralised society out of the prevailing helplessness and imbue it with self-respect and courage to fight and surmount the social and religious excesses of the Brahmins as well as the ruling Mughals.

His Heritage

It is very important to understand that the contribution of Guru Gobind Singh was the natural culmination of the process of building Sikhism meticulously engineered by the earlier Gurus. His creation of the Khalsa, was, in fact, a consolidation of the process started by Guru Nanak, and extended and augmented by each successive Guru.

Guru Nanak enunciated the equality of human beings :-

*Caste and dynastic pride are condemnable notions;
The One Master shelters all existence.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 83

And it was practised among the Sikhs much before Guru Gobind Singh's time. Sikh *sangats* practised equality between castes and gender. It is

clear from the institutions of '*langar*', the role of women in the Sikh life, a clear denunciation of '*Sati*', and the encouragement of widow marriage, etc.

Fighting the evil and cleaning the world of social and religious excesses was a special attribute of the Sikh tradition. Guru Nanak deplored fearlessly the corrupt practices of the Muslim rulers and the built-in excesses of the Hindu society like the caste discriminations and meaningless rituals. He confronted the invading Babar and condemned his atrocities. Guru Hargobind fought battles with the Mughals; and Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan refused to meet Aurengzeb. Guru Arjun Dev and Guru Teg Bahadur sacrificed their lives fighting for the cause of freedom of social and religious thoughts. It was with this heritage, that Guru Gobind Singh arrived on the scene and blessed the Sikhs into the Khalsa discipline. His reason, as stated by him, was :

*When all other means fail,
It is just to wield the sword.*

— Zafarnama

Guru Gobind Singh was simply following the lead of Guru Nanak :

*Shouldst thou seek to engage in the game of love,
Step into my street with thy head placed on thy palm;
While on to this stepping,
Ungrudgingly sacrifice your head.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1412

The roots of a pure and pious people and the vision of a 'Khalsa' can be discerned in the Sikh tradition. Bhagat Kabir wrote,

*Such of God's servants become Khalse (God's own)
As of loving devotion have realization.*

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 655

The choice of the figure of five deployed by Guru Gobind Singh in the choice of *Panj Piaras* was a part of a continuing thought. Guru Nanak wrote :

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਪੰਜ ਸਥੇ ਗੁਰ ਭਾਈ ॥

— Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1041

and Bhai Gurdas sang the esteem given to a gathering of five :

ਇਕੁ ਸਿਖੁ ਦੁਇ ਸਾਧਸੰਗ ਪੰਜੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ॥

— Bhai Gurdas, Var 13/19

And then the concept of a double-edged sword used in the *Amrit* ceremony reminds one of Guru Hargobind who donned two swords, one for *Miri* and the other for *Piri*.

Contribution of Guru Gobind Singh

It is important to remember that Guru Gobind Singh arrived on the scene as Tenth Nanak in a new human frame to continue the work initiated through the earlier successive Gurus. This conclusion is corroborated in the hymns of Satta and Balwand who sang about Guru Nanak's transferring his 'Light' to Guru Angad, who in turn passed it to Guru Amardas, and so on. Guru Gobind Singh was imbued with the same light. The process of building the Sikhs was, therefore, a continuing process, and the time was ripe now to invigorate the Sikhs to additional tools that were essential to the rule of righteousness.

It is also important to understand that the foundations laid by the first nine Gurus were essential to the magnificent and glorious Panth established by the tenth Guru. The ground had been made fertile and it was time to plant the tree of the 'Khalsa'. Guru Gobind Singh, on that historic day of Vaisakhi in 1699, got a magnificent response to his call for volunteers who were willing to sacrifice themselves there and then. Those assembled there were the Sikhs of Guru Nanak who had already been inculcated with spirit of sacrifice. It is difficult to imagine but my mind tells me that, otherwise, such a call made to another assembly might not have had the same response.

Two basic points emerge from the above discussion.

1. Most of the basic philosophy of the Sikh faith was already in place, established through the line of Gurus from Guru Nanak onwards.
2. There was a devoted community practising these values, *sewa*, devotion to *Gurbani*, equality of all and other values imbibed by them through the teachings of Guru Nanak.

With so much having been achieved already, what then is the importance of Guru Gobind Singh and his impact on this milieu ? Guru Gobind Singh raised the existing tradition to a pinnacle and left the generation of Sikhs to its rewards. He provided a discipline to preserve and keep Sikhism alive and in *Charhdi Kala*. And indeed, it has withstood the upheavals of history including three *ghallugharas* and an uninterrupted onslaught from unscrupulous Brahmanism and unethical governments. It is a world religion now, admired by all who have had the good fortune to learn its tenets. Let us look at some of the Guru's achievements, one by one.

Enunciation of Adi Granth as Guru

It is almost impossible to find a lineage of inherited or bestowed

positions where as many as ten successive incumbents could be equally enlightened, yet this is so in the lineage of Sikh Gurus.

Guru Gobind Singh in a remarkable stroke of his genius passed the Guruship to the 'Shabad' or the Guru's word. This has blocked the possibility of any errors in the choice of human Guru, often possible occurring in human affairs. And it fits so well with Guru Nanak's philosophy wherein 'Shabad' is foremost. The scriptures are the most valued possessions of any religion, and to give these the status of Guru is most befitting and appropriate. Guru Granth Sahib is the everlasting Guru and will be there till the Sikhs are there.

Sewa Khalsa Style, a Forerunner of Red Cross

Here again sewa or serving others irrespective of their caste or creed is a basic concept of *gurmat* philosophy, but Guru Gobind Singh took it to its pinnacle. He prepared Sikhs like Bhai Kahnaiya who extended his services even to the enemy. The war ethics inculcated into Guru Gobind Singh's Sikhs did not permit harming women, children or even the cowardly and those incapacitated through injury. Abusing the women or plundering is unknown in the wars of the Khalsa. Such discipline is taught to all great armies in the world, but Sikhs adhere to these high standards, because their basic training embodies saintliness and ethics. The institution of Red Cross came into existence in 1859 almost a hundred and fifty years after the advent of the unique service pattern developed by the great Guru and practised by Bhai Kanhaiya. In the ranks of the Red Cross it is the neutral nations that serve the two warring sides, but in the Sikh ranks the Sikh himself is serving the enemy. The world has a long way to go to reach that kind of attitude, but the Sikhs have imbibed it as an essential ingredient of their ethical discipline.

Establishing a Democratic System

The principle of democratic decision-making process was incorporated in the institution of *Panj Piaras*. This institution was developed and practised long before the modern democracies appeared. While the inherent weaknesses of these democratic systems are causing a great deal of pain to the world populations, Guru Gobind Singh's 'Real democracy' never falters. Ethical living, an essential ingredient in the Guru's infrastructure, is missing in other ethos.

The Guru passed on the spiritual guidance of the Sikhs to Guru

Granth Sahib and the earthly leadership to the *Panj Piaras*. After having initiated the five beloved ones into the Khalsa, the Guru himself also joined it. He did not just stipulate the authority of the five, but did actually obey them. He accepted and paid a fine to the five *piaras* when he saluted with his arrow the grave of a Muslim *fakir*, Dadu, a practice forbidden in the fundamentals of the Khalsa ethics.

Wah wah Gobind Singh !

Aapay gur chela.

– Var Bhai Gurdas II

His democratic system of ruling through *Panj Piaras* has been practised by the Sikh masses at the level of local *sangats* as well as bigger assemblies. The decision has to be made by the *Panj Piaras* in the benign presence of Guru Granth Sahib. They have the authority to award punishment to offenders and admit the declared *tankhahiyyas*. The farsighted vision of this concept came in handy at the time of a great crisis; the type of crisis under which most other communities would have perished. The Khalsa army became leaderless after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839. The army was at a crisis point under the anarchy created by the intrigues of the army generals and the ministers of the Lahore *durbar*. During this period (1839-1848) army *panchayats* were organised that kept up the spirit of the Khalsa in their struggle against the British take-over. The *panchayats* functioned through *Panj Piaras*, took vital decisions and awarded punishments. These were all voluntarily accepted. Notably, these bodies quelled the insurrections and also proclaimed Daleep Singh, a minor, as successor to the kingdom.

Later on in the nineteenth century, Sikhism came under considerable pressure from the Christian missionaries and even a more powerful onslaught from Arya Samaj. The Singh Sabha was evolved at this time, and it was run under the collective leadership of the *panj piaras*, Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia, Professor Gurmukh Singh, Giani Dit Singh, Sardar Maya Singh and Sardar Jawahar Singh. The Sikh masses rallied around and came out with flying colours. Is it not amazing that the decisions of the *Panj Piaras* were accepted willingly as a gift from the God Himself? The *Panj Piaras* are regarded to be imbued by the spirit of the Lord. Even now the Akali Dal and Shriomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee function through the decisions of the *Panj Piaras*. Most of the problems which bother Sikhs of the present generation, like the unending feuds in the gurdwara management committees, are a result of introduction of the western concept of

democracies which forces elections and constitutions on the corporate bodies. It is about time that we realised the strength of our own institution of *Panj Piaras* bestowed to us by our visionary Guru, for unmitigated faith in the system is essential to any success. The decision of *Panj Piaras* is a product of five different thought processes, inspired by the Guru's light, and enjoys his authority.

Creation of the Khalsa

The most notable achievement attributed to Guru Gobind Singh is the creation of the Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh did not just create the Khalsa, but he laid down discipline, which ensures that the Khalsa can reach those high ideals within the framework of worldly constraints. Guru Nanak had already provided enough guidance towards ethical living, but fighting the injustices often requires soldierly attributes. Guru Gobind Singh was determined to achieve it.

*When I shall make sparrows fight the hawks,
And just one Sikh fight a flock, sawa lakh.
Then alone, am I worth my name Gobind Singh.*

He succeeded in creating a nation of Khalsa which transformed the destiny of the Indian nation and brought to an end, once for all, the foreign domination of the Mughal empire. His spirit lives on even today. Only nineteen months after the demise of the great Guru, his Khalsa, under Banda Bahadur accomplished a formidable task, killed the tyrant ruler Wazir Khan, the murderer of Sahibzadas, and established the first Sikh state in Sirhind region. Some fifty years later, the Khalsa ruled the entire region between the rivers Ganges and Indus.

World Leader, Ahead of His Times

With a deep insight into human nature, the Guru was a great psychologist. He deployed a unique method to pull out the bravest from the ranks. In one stroke of his genius, five death-defying individuals emerged. The Sikh Gurus had never preached organised or forced conversion into the Sikh faith, and as such, only willing souls came into the Sikh fold. Here again, by imposing a voluntary but a more rigorous discipline, Guru Gobind Singh brought in the fittest to join the Khalsa. And his insistence on the strict observance of the *Rahit* ensures that the non-believer gets filtered out and is not recognised as one of the Guru's Sikhs.

The voluntary acceptance of the cruel and torturous deaths by innumerable Khalsa bears testimony to the Guru's leadership and the

characters it built. The contemporary English ambassador in Delhi describes the steadfast courage of Banda Bahadur and his companions when they were captured and executed:

‘About 780 prisoners had been brought to the place along with Banda and that one hundred of them were beheaded each day. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatised from the new formed religion.’

What other leadership could produce such individuals?

The Guru provided to his Khalsa, the necessary spirit to achieve his ideals, and all that he has blessed has far-reaching implications.

And in all this, he was far ahead of his times. Guru Gobind Singh, made sure that this tradition continues by spelling out the practice of naming men as Singh and women as Kaur. Besides bestowing a spirit of equality, this decision has other far-reaching consequences. It is a reminder of courage to the man to behave bravely like a lion and of dignified princely conduct to women. The new incumbent into the faith may not change the original name and simply add Singh or Kaur to the name, which is indeed very practical and convenient.

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*Others have someone to lean upon;
To me, poor and forlorn, the sole support art Thou.
Unless Thou take abode in my mind,
How may I not wail to distraction ?*

– Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 791

ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਰੋਇ ਮੰਘ ਨਿਮਾਣੀ ਇਕੁ ਤੂ ॥
ਕਿਉ ਨ ਮਰੀਜੈ ਰੋਇ ਜਾ ਲਗੁ ਚਿੱਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਹੀ ॥

SIKH PILGRIMAGE : A SEARCH FOR AMBIGUITY

ISHWINDER SINGH*

The Sikh doctrinal position vis-à-vis pilgrimage is considered so well established that there have been very few scholarly studies and articles on Sikh pilgrimage. Paine details the motives and practices of Sikh pilgrims and discusses¹ the apparent contradiction between Guru Nanak's teachings and the continuing popularity of pilgrimage amongst the Sikhs. He feels that the contradiction is not that sharp as it might first appear because in his opinion Guru Nanak himself 'had a certain ambivalence about pilgrimage'² and he 'himself used deliberately ambiguous language'³.

Paine feels that the later Gurus were faced with a rapidly expanding constituency and changed social forces and hence they found it hard to sustain Guru Nanak's minimalist teachings. So the third Guru founded the specifically Sikh bathing-place of Goindval, the fourth added a *sarovar* specifically as a place of pilgrimage and the fifth Guru stressed in his *bani* that by bathing in this *sarovar* the residues of all sins are erased.⁴

This paper intends to put some of the conclusions arrived by Paine to test on the touchstones of Sikh history and Gurbani to determine their correctness or otherwise.

Precept and Practice

It would be useful to clarify at the outset that this paper is primarily concerned with the teachings of the Sikh Gurus with regard to pilgrimage and not the practices of the Sikhs as such. This approach is somewhat different from Paine's, who first studies the practices popular amongst the Sikhs and then evaluates the Sikh precepts through a somewhat colored lens. We seek to avoid this pitfall by restricting ourselves to the precepts.

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Pilgrimage: Contemporary Understanding

The root cause of the wrong conclusions arrived at by Paine is the definition of the term ‘pilgrimage’ he uses. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines a pilgrimage as ‘a journey to a sacred place for religious reasons’. However, as per Paine’s definition a pilgrimage could be for both religious and non-religious reasons. He feels motivations for pilgrimage could even include escape from difficulties at home, adventure and holiday!⁵

The problem arises when we try to understand the teachings of the Sikh Gurus with regard to pilgrimage in light of this modern and somewhat imprecise definition of the term. In those times pilgrimage was not a matter of choice but one of religious compulsion. The overwhelming motivation for undertaking pilgrimage was not adventure and holiday but a genuine belief that it was necessary to expiate sins and clear the way for salvation. As we will see later on, the Sikh Gurus explicitly rejected these two aspects of the contemporary understanding of pilgrimage.

Was Guru Nanak Ambiguous?

Paine’s analysis of Guru Nanak’s views on pilgrimage is confusing to say the least. While on one hand he argues that Guru Nanak clearly viewed pilgrimage as an external activity to be a danger to the inner spiritual life, he simultaneously muddies the waters by saying that ‘Guru Nanak even speaks of Hindu *tiraths* in terms that suggest that spiritual journeys to them can be valuable if they are undertaken in a spirit of spiritual search and devotion’.⁶ To support his latter assertion, Paine quotes his following translation of a verse from Japji

Jewels created by You, together with the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage made sacred by You, sing Your praise.

— Guru Granth Sahib, p.6

However, there is nothing in the verse that supports the conclusion that Paine has drawn about Guru Nanak’s views about Hindu *tiraths*. Mere reference to the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage does not imply their acceptance. What is being said in the stanza is that the Almighty is so great that its praises are sung by all his creation.

Paine is correct in asserting that Guru Nanak himself visited both Hindu and Muslim places of pilgrimage. However, the purpose of visiting these places was to learn about the beliefs and practices of adherents of other faiths and later to spread his message. The intention was not to join in a pilgrimage but to educate those who visit those

places and stay there.

Another curious comment made by Paine is that Guru Nanak ‘never condemned pilgrimage as such, only pilgrimage without inner devotion’.⁷ The eristic nature of the comment becomes evident at once since Paine himself accepts that Guru Nanak clearly viewed external pilgrimage to be a danger to the inner spiritual life. Can there be any greater condemnation than being referred to as an obstacle to the path of being one with God? To clarify this point further we use a verse that Paine has himself quoted:

Pilgrimages, fasts, purification and self-discipline are of no use, nor are rituals, religious ceremonies or empty worship.

Nanak, emancipation comes only by loving devotional worship

— Guru Granth Sahib, p.75

It is interesting to note that while translating the second line, Paine stops after just translating half of the line. The portion omitted is revealing. The translation of the complete second line is:

Nanak, emancipation comes only by loving devotional worship of God Through duality the mortal is engrossed in worldliness.

— Guru Granth Sahib, p.75

The views of Guru Nanak become amply clear once we translate the complete line, the second part clearly highlighting the dangers of getting engrossed in useless rituals that lead one astray from the path of God realization.

As a devout Hindu, Bhai Lehna used to undertake annual pilgrimages to Hindu centers. However, once he accepted Guru Nanak as his preceptor he gave up pilgrimages. Later, he went on to become the second Sikh Guru. The same was the story of Guru Amar Das.

To summarize using McLeod’s words one can say that Guru Nanak had declared in very plain terms that there was only one pilgrimage center for the true devotee and that was within his own heart.⁸ Thus, inner devotion was not prescribed as a ‘superior’ path as Paine puts it, rather it was the ‘only prescribed path’.

Baoli at Goindval

The existence of a large well or *Baoli* at Goindval seems to have confused many Western observers of Sikhism, Crispin Paine being no exception. It has been incorrectly assumed that Guru Amar Das intended this to be a center of pilgrimage with a bathing-place for the Sikhs.⁹

However, there is no evidence to sustain the above-mentioned

assumption. Amongst all the compositions of Guru Amar Das in the Guru Granth Sahib there is not a single one that refers the Sikhs to bathe in the *Baoli* at Goindval for their emancipation and salvation.¹⁰ On the other hand, in conformity with the teachings of Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das enunciates:

This filth of egoism cannot be washed away, even by taking cleansing baths at hundreds of sacred shrines.

— Guru Granth Sahib, p 39

Everything is within the home of your own self; there is nothing beyond it.

— Guru Granth Sahib, p 425

True is that place of pilgrimage, where one bathes in the pool of Truth, and achieves self-realization as Gurmukh. The Gurmukh understands his own self. The Lord has shown that the Word or the Guru's Sabad is the sixty-eight sacred shrines of pilgrimage; bathing in it, filth is washed away.

— Guru Granth Sahib, p 753

Since Goindval was a new town founded by Guru Amar Das, he had to provide for a reliable water supply for the local people. This was important for a primarily agrarian society, for in those times droughts were common. It was with this purpose in mind that the Guru had the *Baoli* constructed.¹¹ Further, it was to remove the discrimination based on caste and faith. Both Hindu and Muslim, low caste and high caste were welcome to use that common source of water, a first in the Indian history.

Sarovar in Amritsar and Guru Arjun's bani

In his article, Paine states that Guru Ram Das added a *sarovar* specifically as a place of pilgrimage and Guru Arjun directed the Sikhs to bathe in it to wash off their sins. To support his assertion he quotes his following translation of a *Sabad* by Guru Arjun:

Bathing in the nectar tank of Ramdas, the residues of all sins are erased.

*One becomes immaculately pure taking the cleansing bath,
The Perfect Guru has bestowed this gift.*

In the Sadh Sangat, the company of the holy, filth is washed off.

— Guru Granth Sahib, p 625

There is no evidence to support the statement that Guru Ram Das intended Harmandir Sahib to be a place of pilgrimage for washing sins by the Sikhs. Infact the last four Gurus never even visited it.¹² All places connected with the Gurus are sacred but that does not mean that

Sikhs are supposed to go on pilgrimages to them.

Now let us see the *Sabad* quoted by Paine. We observe that he translates four lines of the *Sabad*, then skips two lines and finally stops after translating the line following the pause (*rahao*). Moreover, the interpretation of the first four line conflicts with not only the interpretation of the line following the pause but also with the teachings of the Gurus enshrined at many other places in the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak had clearly stated that external bathing is of no avail in washing off the filth within, a point reiterated by the later Gurus. Infact Guru Arjun himself clearly states:

I meditate on the Feet of God within my mind. This is my cleansing bath at all the sacred shrines of pilgrimage.

— Guru Granth Sahib, p 95

Thus, it is not possible that Guru Arjun would recommend bathing in the *sarovar* at Harmandir Sahib to wash off one's sins.

There is extensive use of allegories and metaphors in Gurbani. One has to keep this in mind while interpreting its message. Moreover, one cannot simply interpret a line while ignoring the overall theme of the *Sabad*. The sentence preceding the pause carries the central theme of a *Sabad* while the sentence following the pause usually explains the theme more clearly.

As has been mentioned above, Paine omits translating the line before the pause and hence misses the central theme of the *Sabad*. The lines before and after the pause in this *Sabad*, which explain the central theme are:

Everything is safe and sound, as we contemplate on the Guru's Word.

In the Sadh Sangat, the company of the holy, filth is washed off.

— Guru Granth Sahib, p 625

Thus 'Ramdas sarovar' refers to the assembly of devotees (*Das*) of the Almighty (*Ram*) and not to the water in the *sarovar* constructed by Guru Ram Das. This should not be surprising because Guru Arjun has himself used the word *sarovar* at other places to denote the company of holy people. For example:

One who bathes in the healing pool of the Saints, that humble being obtains the supreme status.¹³

The Divine name is likened to the water of the *sarovar* and Guru Arjun says that the past sins of those who get immersed in this nectar get washed off. Prof Sahib Singh, widely regarded as the most knowledgeable Gurbani scholar, has given this interpretation in his

exegesis of the Sikh scripture.¹⁴ Some scholars also reiterated this interpretation during a recent discussion on the Internet.¹⁵

Conclusion

The above analysis makes it amply evident that there is no ambiguity in the teachings of the Gurus with regard to pilgrimage. Paine's study in ambiguity seems more like a search for ambiguity in the teachings of the Gurus after he observes the continuing popularity of pilgrimage amongst the Sikhs.

To conclude we can say that Gurbani clearly instructs that the only pilgrimage is the awareness of the Infinite within each of us. There is no place of pilgrimage outside of us. The journey to the Infinite within is the only pilgrimage that can cure all ills; it is the only panacea.¹⁶

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## THE CELESTIAL FOUNT AND THE ULTIMA THULE

JOGINDER SINGH\*

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ਜਿਉ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਜਲੁ ਆਇ ਖਟਾਨਾ ॥  
ਤਿਉ ਜੋਤੀ ਸੰਗ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾਨਾ ॥

The instinctive desire to merge with *Akalpurkh* (God), the celestial source of our existence, is paramount in every human soul.

*Hey Akalpurkh, where art thou?, clamours the soul.*

*Hey 'Patit Paawan', why don't you reveal yourself to us sinners?*

*Hey Waheguru, how do we seek your benevolence?*

*The perennial questions relating to Divinity.*

Evidently before we can realise an answer to any question or solve any problem we must be armed with the requisite perception and the faculty of instinctive recognition of Truth.

Being mortals and a very small part of the whole, let us first search our own selves, because the whole cannot be conceived by a part. It is enough, if the part is able to understand itself and become aware that we are a part of something larger. This instinctive knowledge of the self alone can lead us to feel the vibrations being emitted by the whole. The original source is unproven. It can only be felt. Development of 'faith' is the path leading to the realisation of *Akalpurkh*. In 'faith' you simply accept and follow the precepts laid down in *Gurbani*, leaving reason behind. It then leads to intense 'Meditation', the deepest phenomena. In that intensity you become 'aware', and some crystallization occurs.

### Perception

We as mortals, dream all the time. We dream subconsciously and struggle to glamorize our own name in the society, in a futile attempt to satisfy our insatiable 'ego'. We dream of higher status, honour and popularity. We dream and dream all the time, creating a dream-world of our own around us. It is this dream-world which sets up a barrier in

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the way of understanding the Reality which actually exists and which our soul is perpetually craving for. It is only when this barrier is removed that one is able to perceive what the Reality is, and then alone we acquire the perception necessary for receiving an answer to the celestial questions. Living in the world of our own creation, we pass our entire life in unawareness. We must deny the deceptive world around us, deny the imaginary glory stuck up in our psyche. It's only when we become tired of this false glory that His beauty begins to reveal itself. The journey then commences towards awareness, developing the perception to recognize the eternal truth and His creations.

### **Path to Perception**

To my mind, there are three possible paths leading towards the goal of discovery:

1. Scientific enquiry
2. Philosophical discussions
3. Theosophical vision

Scientific enquiry is possible in relation to materialistic things and not spiritual. This is so because science proceeds rationally depending upon the human senses alone, and, therefore, it has its own limitations. It cannot comprehend what lies beyond logic. It cannot travel towards the ‘unconscious mind’. The source of the scientific enquiry is finite. The source has to be greater if we are to search for an answer to questions relating to the infinite. Einstein and Wittgenstein, the great scientists at one stage felt — “There are somethings about which there is a point beyond which nothing can be said, and we must remain silent about. Every individual has to himself experience the extra-sensual Reality”. The barrier is reached. I would rather not rely upon science as a means to discover the Divine. Life and time continue to exist in the mist.

Philosophy is the science of seeking knowledge and wisdom touching upon the most general causes and principles of physical phenomena. Philosophy expounds the system relating to the ‘Conduct of Life’ which includes ethics, serenity and calmness. Even when it touches the fringe of the Reality, it is not certain about the Truth and each philosopher has his own individual ideas. In philosophy your mind is wandering, examining different possibilities. In the case of philosophers the discussion and dialogue are like wielding a sword in the air and the search goes on and on endlessly. The problem remains unresolved and life continues to exist in the mist. Philosophical approach, too, therefore, is not of much avail.

Theosophical vision then remains the only path which can hopefully carry us to the ultima Thule. Let us traverse this route and search for *Akalpurkh*. Remember, when trekking on this route one has to abandon everything which was thus far considered as desirable and relishing. ‘Logic’ must give way to ‘Faith’. Where there is faith, no argument is necessary. Where there is no faith, no argument is sufficient. Faith means, one must attune one’s mind to have complete belief in the wisdom of Gurbani of the Gurus and the precepts of other enlightened souls. It’s only then that you are able to grasp the full meaning and purport of what you read or listen. It’s only then that Guru’s blessings and His benevolence shall awaken an awareness in you to see life coming out of the mist into the crystal. The ‘ego’ in oneself must be reined. This is so, because for an answer to the question connected with the Celestial, the light will glimmer in your mind only if you are attuned to things celestial and not the materialistic self. All our life we keep standing and looking upwards, trying to search for Him in the void of the skies, not realizing that we are on the bank of the river with ‘Amrit’ flowing close-by. All that is required is to surrender and bend to drink the nectar. We should look for the flame of the in-dwelling Divinity and protect it from the winds of illusions blowing around us. A time comes when one starts discerning the flashes of the Divine in esoteric happenings from day-to-day and the Flame within starts glowing, generating an awareness of *Akalpurkh*.

God pervades the cosmos. He is all around us. He is within us. He is saturated in every animate and inanimate being. The cool wind rustles through the trees swaying in ecstasy but it cannot be seen. We can only feel its recouping effect on our tired limbs. The entire *srishti* is moving on a preordained pattern and shall ever continue to move like the river flowing on a perennial timeless course before your very eyes. The sunrise and the sunset, waxing and waning of the moon, the travelling stars, the flowing rivers, the changing seasons, the mountains, the abyssal oceans, the play of the five elements, the birth and passing away of different living beings, *et al.* This is the reflection of God and we are all a part of these phenomena. When your inner mind wonders at His creations, you are perceiving and wondering at Him.

ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਨਾਦ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਵੇਦ ॥ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਜੀਅ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਭੇਦ ॥  
 ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਰੰਗ ॥ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਨਾਗੇ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਜੰਤ ॥  
 ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਪਉਣ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਪਾਣੀ ॥ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਅਗਨੀ ਬੇਡਹਿ ਵਿਡਾਣੀ ॥  
 ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਖਾਣੀ ॥ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਸਾਦਿ ਲਗਹਿ ਪਰਾਣੀ ॥

ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਸੰਜੋਗੁ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਵਿਜੋਗੁ ॥ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਭਰੁ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਭੋਗੁ ॥  
 ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਸਾਲਾਹੁ ॥ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਉਝੜ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਰਾਹੁ ॥  
 ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਨੇੜੈ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਦੂਰਿ ॥ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਹਾਜਰਾ ਹਜੂਰਿ ॥  
 ਵੈਖਿ ਵਿਡਾਣੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਬੁਝਣੁ ਪੂਰੈ ਭਾਗਿ ॥੧॥

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 463-464

*Akal Purakh* is 'Truth and Tranquillity'.

*Akalpurakh* is within you. Meditate and search with the touchstone of Gurbani, the celestial Word :

ਕੀਏ ਉਪਾਵ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਨਿ ਦਹ ਦਿਸਿ ਕਉ ਉਠਿ ਧਾਇਆ ॥  
 ਘਟ ਹੀ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਬਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਤਾ ਕੇ ਮਰਮੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੨॥

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 703

*For emancipation I ventured in directions ten.*

*Akalpurakh Niranjan abideth within,  
 This Secret I did not discern.*

¤

*One created blind by the Lord, from Him alone sight may find.  
 Such a one his own will would follow, despite advice to  
 him given :*

*His own will following where reality is not yet visible.  
 Saith Nanak : How without knowing the object may the  
 seeker obtain it ?*

– Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 954

ਸਾਹਿਬਿ ਅੰਧਾ ਜੋ ਕੀਆ ਕਰੇ ਸੁਜਾਖਾ ਹੋਇ ॥  
 ਜੇਹਾ ਜਾਣੈ ਤੇਹੋ ਵਰਤੈ ਜੇ ਸਹੁ ਆਖੈ ਕੋਇ ॥  
 ਜਿਥੈ ਸੁ ਵਸਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪਈ ਆਪੇ ਵਰਤਉ ਜਾਣਿ ॥  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਗਾਹਕੁ ਕਿਉ ਲਏ ਸਰੈ ਨ ਵਸਤੁ ਪਛਾਣਿ ॥

## NISHAN-E-KHALSA ?

TIRATH KAUR

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These are some of the reflections penned down by my daughter Tirath Kaur in response to an article titled *Nishan-i-Khalsa* which appeared in *India Today*, in 1999, during the Tricentenary of the Khalsa. A person of very deep sensitivities and sensibilities, she always wanted to reach out and address life's concerns courageously. Crystal-clear in her thoughts, she never hesitated in calling a spade a spade if the situation so warranted.

Unfortunately, she died in a car accident in 2002. I am grateful to the Editor of *Abstracts of Sikh Studies* who has agreed to publish this article in the Vaisakhi 2004 issue of the journal. As the issues raised in the article are as relevant for the Khalsa Today as they were during the Vaisakhi of the year 1999.

– Baljit Kaur\*

As we approach the tricentenary of the birth of the Khalsa let us give some thought, to the spirit that Guru Gobind Singh instilled into his ideal, the “Khalsa”. (A person envisaged to be pure in both mind and action).

- i. The principle of freedom to make the right choice, despite tyranny and oppression.
- ii. The ability to extend a helping hand to those who are weak and under stress.
- iii. To educate and uplift ourselves so as to use our knowledge and skills in the pursuit of a better society.

To instill these principles in the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh led the way by personal example. He advised his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur to take a stand and fight for the rights of the Kashmiri Pundits to worship as they pleased. Guru Tegh Bahadur was not a Hindu, yet he embraced an extremely painful and undignified death for the

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principle of freedom of religion and harmony.

Do the Sikhs today even remember why our Guru was martyred? Do we accept the right of others to worship as they choose and do we respect their freedom of choice?

After his father's death, Guru Gobind Singh was faced with a difficult choice. Should he compromise his beliefs and lead a comfortable and secure life or should he fight for what he believed was right. We all know what he chose and what a heavy price he paid for it.

However, our Guru stressed very firmly that in the fight against oppression, his Sikhs should only resort to the sword when all other means failed.

Even though Guru Gobind Singh fought for his principles, all his battles were defensive in nature. He had several victories, yet he did not annex an inch of land nor did he collect any booty or take prisoners. On the contrary, a Sikh by the name of Kanhaiya, tended to those injured in battle irrespective of whether they were allies or foes. Guru Gobind Singh blessed Bhai Kanhaiya saying that he embodied the spirit of (true) Sikhism.

Do we remember what he fought for? Do we have any compassion for our friends, let alone our foes?

Guru Gobind Singh was a great advocate of education and learning. Not only did he read all the ancient scriptures but he was proficient in several languages. He was an excellent poet and writer as is apparent from his works. He had in his employ several scholars and poets who had fled Aurangzeb's court. They imparted education to his Sikhs. A special group of Sikhs, known as the *Nirmalas*, were sent to Benares to study Sanskrit and the ancient Hindu scriptures which they then taught to the Sikhs. Maulvis taught Persian. Debates were held, the Sikhs were encouraged to open their minds. What are we doing to help the illiterate Sikhs? Do the educated Sikhs have open minds?

Guru Gobind Singh became the spiritual leader of the Sikhs at the age of nine. He had no kingdom, no resources, no trained army or weapons, but he had the courage of his convictions.

He moulded a passive, downtrodden and fear-ridden group of people from various castes and creeds into a band of fearless, idealistic and optimistic men and women willing to lay down their lives for the path of righteousness.

Do we still reflect the true spirit of Sikhism? Do our leaders hold any convictions? Are the educated and prosperous Sikhs ignoring their

responsibilities to the community? Are the intelligentsia turning a blind eye to the fanatics who are distorting the ideals of our Guru ? These are the questions we must ask ourselves as we approach the tricentenary.

So, on 13th of April, 1999, we celebrate the birth of the Khalsa. We celebrate that the Khalsa is still alive and bearing aloft the banner of Guru Gobind Singh.

In *India Today* we read that the Sikh leaders plan to spend 350 *crores* to celebrate the tricentenary by building the “8th Wonder of the World” the “*Nishan-e-Khalsa*”.

Why not spend the 350 *crores* on the Khalsa’s education and the creation of jobs, so that they can better their lot in life.

Hundreds of young farmers are committing suicide in the villages as they are unable to pay back agricultural loans.

Scores of misguided youth are turning to terrorism because of lack of employment.

The need of the hour is the establishment of more schools, colleges, hospitals, old age pension and industries.

Do we need the “8th Wonder of the World” ? Don’t they know that the “*Nishan-e-Khalsa*” is the Khalsa himself ?

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*Attachment with the ignorant or with one of a higher status,
Is fragile as a line drawn on water,
That no way is traceable.*

– Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 474

ਨਾਲਿ ਇਆਣੇ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਵਡਾਰੂ ਸਿਉ ਨੇਹੁ ॥
ਪਾਣੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਲੀਕ ਜਿਉ ਤਿਸ ਦਾ ਥਾਉ ਨ ਬੇਹੁ ॥

THE TRIPARTITE TREATY*

Treaty of Alliance and Friendship between Maharaja Ranjeet Singh and Shah Shooja-ool-Mookl, with the approbation of, and in concert with the British Government. (Done at Lahore 26th June, 1838, signed at Simla, 23rd July, 1838).

Whereas a treaty was formerly concluded between Maharaja Runjeet Singh and Shah Shooja-ool-Mookl, consisting of fourteen articles, exclusive of the preamble and the conclusion. And whereas the execution of the provisions of the said treaty was suspended for certain reasons. And whereas at this time, Mr. W.H. McNaughten having been deputed by the Right Honorable George Lord Auckland, G.C.B., Governor General of India, to the presence of Maharaja Runjeet Singh, and vested with full powers to form a treaty, in a manner consistent with the treaty aforesaid is revived, and concluded with certain modifications, and four new articles have been added thereto, with the approbation of, and in concert with the British Government, the provisions whereof, ascertained in the following eighteen articles, will be duly and faithfully observed.

ARTICLE 1- Shah Shooja-ool Mookl disclaims all title on the part of himself, his heirs and successors and all the Suddozies, to the territories lying on either bank of the river Indus, that may be possessed by the Maharaja, viz, Cashmeer, including its limits, E.W., N.S., together with the fort of Attok, Chuch, Huzara, Khubul, Umb, with its dependencies, on the left bank of the aforesaid river, and on the right bank Peshawar, with the Eusufzaee territory the Khutuks, Husht Nuggur, Mitchnee, Kohat, Hunggoo, and all places dependent on Peshawar, as far as the Khyber pass, Bunnoo, the Vuzeeree territory, Dower-Tank, Gurang, Kalabagh and Khooshalghur, with their dependent districts,

* A Historical Document Revealing the Glory of the Khalsa Raj. Courtesy : *Lion of Punjab, Sher-e-Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh* by Thakur Ranvir Singh, published by International Council of Punjab, UG-58, Palika Place, Punchkuian Road, New Delhi.

Derah Ismeel Khan and its dependency, Kot Mithen, Oomur Kot, and their dependent territory, Sunghur, Hurrunha-Dajul, Hajeeapore, Rajenpore, and the three Kutches, as well as Munkehra, with its district, and the province of Mooltan, situated on the left bank. These countries and places are considered to be the property, and to form the estate, of the Maharaja, the Shah neither has nor will have any concern with them, they belong to the Maharaja and his posterity from generation to generation.

ARTICLE 2- The people of the country on the other side of Khyber will not be suffered to commit robberies, or aggressions, or any disturbances on this side. If any defaulter of either state, who has embezzled the revenue, takes refuge in the territory of the other, each party engages to surrender him, and no person shall obstruct the passage of the stream which issues out of the Khyber, defile and supplies the fort of Futtigurh with water according to ancient usage.

ARTICLE 3- As, agreeable to the treaty established between the British Government and the Maharaja, no one can cross from the left to the right bank of the Sutlej without a passport from the Majoraja, the same rule shall be observed regarding the passage of the Indus, whose waters join the Sutlej, and no one shall be allowed to cross the Indus without the Maharaja's permission.

ARTICLE 4- Regarding Shikarpore and the territory of Scinde, on the right bank of the Indus, the Shah will agree to abide by whatever may be settled as right and proper in conformity with the happy relations of friendship subsisting between the British Government and the Maharaja through Captain Wade.

ARTICLE 5- When the Shah shall have established his authority in Cabool and Candahar, he will annually send the Maharaja the following articles, viz-55 high bred horses of Approved color, and pleasant paces, 11 Persian scimetars, 7 Persian poignards, 25 good mules, fruits of various kinds, both dry and fresh, and Sirdas or Mush merons, of a sweet and delicate flavour (to be sent throughout the year by the way of Cabool river to Peshawar). grapes, pomegranates, apples, quinces, almonds, raisins, pistahs or chestnuts, on abundant supply of each, as well as pieces of satin of every colour, chogas of fur, kimkhabs wrought with gold and silvers and Persian carpets, altogether to the number of 101 pieces all the articles the Shah will continue to send every year to the Maharaja.

ARTICLE 6 - Each party shall address the other on terms of equality.

ARTICLE 7- Merchants of Afghanistan who may be desirous of trading to Lahore, Amrutsir, or any other parts of the Maharaja's possessions, shall not be stopped or molested in their way. On the contrary, strict orders shall be issued to facilitate their intercourse, and the Maharaja engages to observe the same line of conduct on his part, in respect to traders who may wish to proceed to Afghanistan.

ARTICLE 8- The Majaraja will yearly send to the Shah the following articles in the way of friendship: 55 pieces of shawls, 25 pieces of muslin, 11 dooputtahs, 5 pieces of kimkhab, 5 scarfs, 5 turbans, 55 loads of Bareh rice (peculiar to Peshawar).

ARTICLE 9- Any of the Maharaja's officers, who may be deputed to Afghanistan to purchase horses, or on any other business, as well as those who may be sent by the Shah into the Punjab, for the purpose of purchasing piece goods, or shawls, etc., to the amount of 11,000 rupees, will be treated by both sides with due attention, and every facility will be afforded to them in the execution of their commission.

ARTICLE 10- Whenever the armies of the two States may happen to be assembled at the same place, on no account shall the slaughter of kine be permitted to take place.

ARTICLE 11- In the event of the Shah raking an auxiliary force from the Maharaja, whatever booty may be acquired from be equally divided between the two contracting parties. If the Shah should succeed in obtaining possession of their property, without the assistance of the Maharaja's troops, the Shah agrees to send a portion of it by his own agent to the Maharaja in the way of friendship.

ARTICLE 12 - An exchange of missions charged with letters and presents shall constantly take place between the two parties.

ARTICLE 13 - Should the Maharaja require the aid of any of the Shah's troops in furtherance of the objects contemplated by this treaty, the Shah engages to send a force commanded by one of his principal officers, in like manner the Maharaja will furnish the Shah, when required, with an auxiliary force, composed of Mahomedans, and commanded by one of the principal officers, as far as Cabool, in furtherance of the objects contemplated by this treaty. When the Maharaja may go to Peshawar, the Shah will depute a Shahzadah to visit him, on which occasions the Maharaja will receive and dismiss him with the honour and consideration due to his rank and dignity.

ARTICLE 14 - The friends and enemies of each of the three high powers, that is to say, the British, the Sikh Governments and Shah Shooja-ool mookl, shall be the friends and enemies of all.

ARTICLE 15 - Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk engages after the attainment of his object, to pay without fail to the Maharaja the sum of two lakhs of rupees, of the Nanukshahee or Kuldar currency, calculation from the date on which the Sikh troops may be dispatched for the purpose of reinstating His Majesty in Cabool, in consideration of the Maharaja stationing a force of not less than 5000 men, cavalry and infantry of the Mahomedan persuasion, within the limits of the Peshawar territory, for the support of the Shah, and to be sent to the aid of his Majesty, whenever the British Government, in concert and counsel with the Maharaja, shall deem their aid necessary, and when any matter of great importance may arise to the westward, such measures will be adopted with regard to it as may seem expedient and proper at the time to the British and Sikh Governments. In the event of the Maharaja's requiring the aid of any of the Shah's troops, a deduction shall be made from the subsidy proportioned to the period for which such aid may be afforded, and the British Government holds itself responsible for the punctual payment of the above sum annually to the Maharaja, so long as the provisions of this treaty are observed.

ARTICLE 16 - Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk agrees to relinquish for himself, his heirs, and successors, all claims of supremacy and arrears of tributes over the country now held by the Ameers of Scinde (which will continue to the Ameers and their successors in perpetuity), on condition of the payment to him by the Ameers of such a sum as may be determined under the mediation of the British Government, 1500000 of rupees of such payment being made over by him to Maharaja Runjeet Singh. On these payments being completed, article 4th of the treaty of the 12th March, 1833, will be considered cancelled, and the customary interchange of letters and suitable presents between the Maharaja and the Ameers of Scinde shall be maintained as heretofore.

ARTICLE 17 - When Shooja-ool-Moolk shall have succeeded in establishing his authority in Afghanistan, he shall not attack or molest his nephew, the ruler of Herat in the possession of the territories now subject to his government.

ARTICLE 18 - Shah Shooja-ool Moolk binds himself, his heirs, and successors, to refrain from entering into negotiations with any foreign State without the knowledge and consent of the British and Sikh Governments, and to oppose any power having the design to invade the British and Sikh territories by force of arms, to the utmost of his ability. The three powers, parties to this treaty, namely, the British Government, Maharaja Runjeet Singh, and Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk,

cordially agree to foregoing articles. There shall be no deviations from them, and in that case the present treaty shall be considered binding for ever, and this treaty shall come into operation from and after the date on which the seals and signatures of the three contracting parties shall have been affixed thereto. Done at Lahore, this 26th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1838, corresponding with the 15th of the month of Assarh 1895, era of Bikurmajeet. Ratified by the Right Honorable the Governor General at Simla, on the 23rd day of July, AD 1838.

(Signed)

Auckland

Runjeet Singh

Shooja-ool Mook

¤

*The worldling's thinking is to value the gift above the Giver.
What may one say about the awareness, thinking and
cleverness of such ?
Despite his cleverness whatever evil he in secret practises,
In all four directions gets known.
One practising righteousness, righteous is known to be;
The evil-doer as such is known.
Lord-Creator ! all is Thy play; what else may man say ?
As long as in the body is thy light,
Thy voice in this light is manifested –
None else without this light may bring this about !
Saith Nanak : By the Master's guidance is envisioned
The sole Creator, repository of all wisdom.*

– Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p 138

ਦੇਦੇ ਬਾਵਹੁ ਦਿਤਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਐਸਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ॥
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਮਤਿ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ਤਾ ਕੀ ਕਿਆ ਕਰਿ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ ॥
ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਹਿ ਕੈ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਚਹੁ ਕੁੰਡੀ ਜਾਣੀਐ ॥
ਜੋ ਧਰਮੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਉ ਹੋਵੈ ਪਾਪਿ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਪਾਪੀ ਜਾਣੀਐ ॥
ਤੂੰ ਆਪੇ ਖੇਲ ਕਰਹਿ ਸਭਿ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਿਆ ਦੂਜਾ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ ॥
ਜਿਚਰੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਤਿਚਰੁ ਜੋਤੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਤੂੰ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਵਿਛੁ ਜੋਤੀ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰਿਹੁ ਦਿਖਾ ਸਿਆਣੀਐ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਦਰੀ ਆਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਇਕੋ ਸੁਘੜ੍ਹ ਸੁਜਾਣੀਐ ॥

YOUTH SECTION

WANTED A CLEAN-SHAVEN SIKH*

Keeping uncut hair is an essential requirement for a Sikh. Then why do Sikhs advertise “Wanted a clean-shaven Sikh” in matrimonial columns?

This is a very common question asked at Sikh youth camps. To present this issue in proper perspective, the outcome of a discussion which took place among the youth at a Sikh youth Camp in BC Canada is reproduced below in full detail.

The Question

A simple question, “Is it OK if a Sikh cuts his hair?” was asked by a trainee. My quick response was, “*nahin* (No). Hair is the identity of a Sikh.” His immediate second question put me in a spot, ‘Then why do people advertise: *Wanted match for a clean-shaven Sikh?*’ “Um...u...m...h..” Before I could answer this question, the boy continued, “Anyway what has long hair to do with the faith of a person? One can be honest, truthful, and religious without keeping long hair.”

To my relief, a bearded European with long hanging hair passed by us. Pointing towards him, I asked the youth, “Is he a Sikh?” The answer was a quick and firm “No,” from the whole group. I continued, “You mean that just keeping long hair does not make a person Sikh. Probably, this is your argument.” The boys agreed. Now, the question before us was, “If keeping long hair does not make one a Sikh, then who is a Sikh and why should a Sikh keep long hair?” We had a frank dialogue to find an answer.

Search for the Answer:

(i) *The faith:* The Sikh faith was founded when Guru Nanak, coming out of the river, told people, “*na koi Hindu, na Musalman.*” He implied that God does not judge people as Hindus or Muslims or any other

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denomination. Before Him, we all are simple human beings and equal. The people, Hindu or Muslim, high caste or low caste, who accepted his preaching and lived accordingly were called Nanak's "sikhs" (note the letter "S" is not capitalized). The word "sikh" is a common noun and it means a disciple, a follower. Nanak, having revealed a new philosophy, became popular as Guru.

The perception of the word Sikh, a member of a new community, which exists today, had not developed then. A "sikh" (follower) of the Guru, continued to be considered a member of his community, Hindu or Muslim. Bhai Mardana and Rai Bular were Muslims. Baba Budha was a Hindu, and Bhai Lalo was a low caste, but they were all "sikhs", disciples of the Guru. The folk saying: "*Nanak Shah fakir, Hindu ka Guru, Musalman ka pir*" became popular wherever Guru Nanak went. Both communities joined the congregation to listen to Guru Nanak. A Hindu raja of Kangra became a "sikh", a disciple of Guru Amar Das, and supplied timber for building the town of Goindwal. Mian Mir, a Muslim holy man, was a "sikh" of Guru Arjan Dev. Painda Khan, a general of Guru Hargobind, was a Muslim.

As Guru Nanak kept long hair¹, his disciples, "sikhs", also started keeping long hair and wearing turbans as their identity. It may be mentioned here that some Hindus, particularly holy persons, already kept their hair long and sported turbans, even before Guru Nanak was born. Muslims tied turbans in their own style. The custom of keeping long hair and wearing turbans was not founded by Guru Nanak; this was a part of a world culture. Europeans also tied turbans and this is mentioned in the Bible (Ezekiel 44: 18-19) as a religious requirement for the Jews while praying.

(ii) *The Sikhs, a new community:* In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh founded a new order called the Khalsa Panth, which came to be known as the Sikh Panth or more often, simply the Sikhs. To be a Sikh, a member of the Panth, all "sikhs", even the Guru himself, had to take Amrit, adopt the 5K uniform, have a new surname (Singh for male, Kaur for female) and agree to follow a prescribed code of conduct, the Khalsa *Rahit*.

The Guru introduced the Nash doctrine² for the Sikhs. Anyone

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1. A Rajasthan archive specifically proves it. In local language the description of Nanak's visit includes a statement which may be briefly translated as, "Nanak accepted all people but not those who used razor (shaved)".
 2. This is true whenever a person accepts a new faith. One cannot have two faiths at the same time. Old faith has to be given up before joining the new faith.

who wanted to be a Sikh had to give up his previous faith (*Dharam Nash*) and his caste (*Kul Nash*). “Taking *Amrit* and adopting a new surname symbolized a new ‘birth’ in the house of the Guru. The Sikhs could no more be members of their old communities. As both words, “*sikh*” and “Sikh”, in Panjabi are written the same way, the word *Singh* was used for the Sikhs to identify them from the “*sikhs*”, the disciples.

Not all the “*sikhs*”, believers in the *gurmat* philosophy, became Sikhs, members of the Panth. According to the intelligence reporter of the Mughal court, who was deputed to cover the 1699 Baisakhi function, about 20,000 “*sikhs*” (the numbers differ with different historians) joined the Khalsa Panth and became Sikhs, the members of the new community. Thus, there were three distinct communities, the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs. These *Amritdhari* Sikhs were known as the Guru Khalsa Panth and the *Guruship* was passed on to them as *Panj Pyaras*.

Deciding not to join the Khalsa Panth, did not mean the “*sikhs*”, the disciples, were no longer the followers of the Sikh faith, an impression which some Sikhs mistakenly express about them today. Such ‘*sikhs*’ were identified as *Sehjdharis*, slow adopters; they were welcome to take time to formally join the Panth. Now, they are better known as *Shardhaloos*, believers of the Sikh faith. Being disciples of the Guru and followers of *gurmat*, they were well-wishers and supporters of the Guru Khalsa Panth. They always sided with the Panth and suffered with them.

The Answer :

The above historical review gives us the answer to the question, “Who is a Sikh?” A person who believes in *gurmat*, takes *Amrit*, wears the 5K uniform and follows the *Rahit* becomes a Sikh. Otherwise, a believer in *gurmat* is a *Shardhaloo*, a “*sikh*”, (but not a Sikh), a person *on his way* to taking *Amrit*, for becoming a Sikh and thus being a full and visible member of the Sikh Panth.

“*Sehjdhari* Sikh” is a contradiction in terms. *Having become a Sikh, one is no more a Sehjdhari*. In the other case, “*Sehjdhari sikh*” the word “*sikh*” is redundant because *Sehjdhari* means a “*sikh*” moving on the path to be a Sikh (*Singh*).

Sehjdharis are well-wishers, supporters, and helpers of the Panth, and they have to be respected as such. It is no favour to them, they deserve it and it is an obligation for the Sikhs to treat them that way.

Let us understand this by an example. During the British Raj, the

Indian Congress party, then the only political organisation working for the freedom of the country, ordered its members to wear *khadi*, homespun cloth, and reject the British manufactured cloth as part of their non-cooperation movement. Almost all Indians supported the Congress but many of them did not want to express it publicly. However, they gave full moral, social, and economic support to the party and its goal. They were accepted as believers of the principles of the Congress philosophy. Because these sympathisers were not its visible members (did not wear *khadi*) to formally join the Congress, they, therefore, could not be given any office of the party. However, their advice was listened to by the Congress party.

Sehjdharis have an analogous status in the Panth. Even though they are not visible (*Keshadhari*) members of the Panth, they play a very important and vital role in the Panthic affairs. They have their belief in *gurmat*, their close relationship with the Sikhs, and their moral, social, and financial support for the Panth. In short, they are the well-wishers of the Panth in all respects.

There is another common example to explain the status of the *Sehjdharis* in the Panth. Many persons from all over the world have moved into the USA and have become *resident-alien*s. They are considered Americans for all purposes but they cannot vote (take part in the political process) because of not having become citizens by taking the oath of loyalty to the nation. As a resident-alien needs to take an oath to claim membership of the nation, a *Sehjdhari* (a resident of the Sikh community) needs to take *Amrit* (oath) to be a member, *citizen*, of the Panth before he can participate in the decision making process (voting and becoming a member of the Sikh institutions / gurdwaras) of the Panth.

It should again be mentioned here, as observed in the very beginning, that keeping long hair and tying a turban alone does not make one a member of the Panth. It is both the faith and the practice of the *Rahit* which makes one a Sikh. Those who do not believe in Guru Gobind Singh and the *Amrit* ceremony founded by him are not Sikhs or members of his Panth.

It is agreed that Radha Swamis, fake Nirankaris, communists, and others who do not believe in *Amrit*, even if they keep un-cut hair and tie turbans, are not Sikhs. They are not even *Sehjdharis* because they do not believe in *gurmat* preached by Guru Nanak (though they may claim so). They believe in another faith and they practise what was rejected by the Guru. One cannot be a member of two faiths at the

same time, for example, a Hindu and a Muslim, a Sikh and a Hindu, or a Sikh and a Radha Swami.

According to the Sikh faith, as already stated, it does not matter in the court of the Lord, whether one is a Sikh, a *Sehjdhari*, a Muslim, a Hindu, or some one else. People are judged only by the deeds they do. Being an *Amritdhari* is the honor of being a member of the Panth, but is not a certificate to be used as a passport to Heaven (anyway, Sikhs do not believe in places like Heaven or Hell.) Neither being a *Sehjdhari*, or being born in any other faith is a disqualification for realizing Truth. Baba Farid, Bhagat Nam Dev, and many other holy persons whose hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, are examples before us.

Another question

At the close of the discussion, a new question cropped up. Were the *Bhagats*, whose hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, Sikhs or not? They did not take *Amrit*.

To find the answer, one must understand that the words “*guru*” and “*sikh*” were in use much earlier than the time of Guru Nanak Dev. They meant a teacher (guide) and a disciple, respectively. The former word “*guru*” is now accepted in the English language and included in the dictionary with the above meaning. Kabir and Sen are mentioned as “*sikhs*” by the famous scholar, Bhai Gurdas. Var 10 -16.

ਸੁਣ ਪਰਤਾਪ ਕਬੀਰ ਦਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਸਿਖ ਹੋਆ ਸੈਣ ਨਾਈ ॥

Kabir was the first disciple, a “*sikh*” of “*guru*” Rama Nand (Note that Rama Nand was a “*guru*” not Guru). Motivated by the honorable status obtained by Kabir, another holy person, Sen, a barber, also became his “*sikh*”, a disciple.

There were (and also are today) many “*gurus*” and innumerable “*sikhs*”, disciples, of their respective “*gurus*”. However, the word Guru and Sikh have a specific meaning in the Sikh faith. The Guru means one of the ten Gurus, besides Guru Granth Sahib, and the Sikh means a member of the Sikh Panth, not just any disciple. Kabir, Nam Dev, Sen, and others were “*sikhs*”, disciples but not Sikhs, members of the Khalsa Panth, which was founded by Guru Gobind Singh much later in 1699.

The Controversial Issue

One of the trainees at the camp, feeling fully satisfied with the above dialogue, brought another controversial issue which he found causing lots of problems in the Sikh Community. He wanted to know the position of the *Sehjdhari* (without turban) and *Keshadhari* Sikhs

(with turban) regarding gurdwara management. The analysis led us to the following:

As only a *citizen* (not a *resident-alien*) of a country can vote, and as only a person who has joined the party can be its office bearer, so only a Sikh (a citizen of Sikh faith), not a *Sehjdhari* (a resident of Sikh faith) is entitled to be an office bearer of the Sikh institutions and gurdwaras. *Sehjdharis*, of course, should be consulted, their views duly respected, and they should be associated in the management of the Sikh institutions. They should not be considered as foreigners, but *residents* of the Sikh Panth as explained earlier. Sikh *Rahit Maryada* requires every devotee to be a practising Sikh to perform as a *granthi*, *ragi*, or *parcharak* of the Sikh faith. Every *Sehjdhari* should be welcome to become an office bearer but only after joining the Sikh Panth by taking *Amrit*.

If a Sehjdhari lays his claim to be a Sikh and thus feels entitled to become a preacher (granthi, ragi, dhadi, kathakar) or the president of a gurdwara, then questions such as, "Why should a Sikh keep long hair?" and "what does a clean-shaven Sikh mean?" will continue to arise and will ever remain unanswered.

Further, when Sikhs hear in the prayer,

"ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸੀਸ ਦਿਤੇ, ਬੰਦ ਬੰਦ ਕਟਵਾਏ, . . .
ਧਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆ ਸਿਖੀ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਬਾਹੀ — Those who sacrificed their heads, got themselves cut joint by joint ...but lived their faith along with their uncut hair," they would wonder, why did the Sikhs suffer so much and sacrifice their lives for living with uncut hair? The answer, which nobody can change, is that letting someone to cut one's hair means he has given up the membership of the Panth (even if he continues to read *Gurbani* and support the Panth as a *shardhaloo*).

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*Not such a one is blind,
As by Divine Ordinance with blindness is struck;
Saith Nanak : truly blind is he that realizes not the
Ordinance.*

— Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 954

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਅੰਧਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿ ਹੁਕਮਹੁ ਅੰਧਾ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਬੁਝਈ ਅੰਧਾ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਇ ॥

O APOSTATE SIKH !*

Tell me, O Apostate Sikh!
Why do you go astray?
Why do you discard Sikh appearance?
What is your compulsion to go away?

What do you gain by losing your form,
By disowning the Guru's norm,
Receiving a slur on your forehead,
And proving traitorous to the Panth ?

Why are you in a dilemma ?
Why waver you in loyalty ?
Why are you inclined towards apostasy,
Giving up the regalia of royalty?

Why you violate the Sikh Code?
Renegading from your Guru is so sad.
Why do you need company of the evil,
And make friendship with the bad?

Remember those two innocent lives
Who preferred to be bricked alive.
They wavered not in faith,
But gave up their lives to let their faith thrive.

Sikhs have learnt to be martyrs,
To write history with their blood.
They never begged for life,
But gave away lives as a scud.

Mothers lost their sons, and
Received garlands of their heads.

* Posted on internet by Harjinder Singh Kukreja

Gave up life, instead their faith.
Smilingly, sans tears ever shed.

They prayed in distress and grief,
Fought till end to be in brief.
But smiles ever played on their lips,
Even death learnt some new tips.

No more is there threat of fanatic law,
No more is their any ruler of Ghazani to threaten,
Then why do you feel so heart-beaten?

The entire world respects your valour.
In enough wealth and property are you fed.
Everything of luxury you own,
But luxuries seem to have gone to your head.

You get the diet you wish,
You get all shines and bright.
You can't discard the hair,
You don't have the slightest right.

The hair are the trust of the Tenth Master,
Violate not the trust you got free.
Why do you earn rebuke from the Panth ?
Why cut at the roots of your life-tree?

Those who ditch their community,
Subservient they ever are to others.
Those who destroy their own dwellings,
And nevertheless sinful brothers.

Get up, take the cudgel,
Nothing will be left if once you are plundered.
The festival of *Gurmat* is on;
Come dear, take part, happily surrendered.

If you bow at the Guru's feet,
And pray with folded hands,
The filth of egoism will vanish surely,
And you will regain *Sardari* grand.

NO CROWN, NO KING ! — NO TURBAN, NO SINGH !! ☰

REVIEWS

RAJASTHAN KA PINGAL SAHITYA

A REVIEW BY INDERJEET SINGH*

Author : Dr Moti Lal Menaria

Publisher : Hindi Granth Ratnakar (Private) Limited, Bombay – 4

Second Edition 1958

Pages : 260+8+8; Price : Rs. 8/-

The literature of Rajasthan has been composed mainly in two languages – Dingal and Pingal. Dingal is a synonym of medieval literary Maru Bhasha (Rajasthani language). Generally, *pingal* means prosody, but in Rajasthan this term came to be used for Brajbhasha as well. Dingal has been the favourite poetic-language of Charans in general, whereas Pingal that of Bhats and Brahmin poets. Such Bhats have also been called Brahm-bhats, because they are different from those *bhats* who keep genealogies, etc. In medieval period (1643-1843 AD), Pingal literature has been composed almost as much as the Dingal literature. Such literature, which has been composed mainly by the court-poets, abounds in the erotic (*shringar*) and the heroic (*vir*) sentiments. However, the heroic-poetry of Dingal has its distinct identity due to its peculiar style, so that when the poets of Rajasthan composed the heroic-poems in Pingal, then the very style of Dingal was used in the treatment of heroic sentiment (alongwith its auxiliary sentiments). Perhaps, for this reason, Dr Hira Lal Maheshwari writes,

“Braj Bhasha mixed with Rajasthani is also called Pingal. The diction and style of Maru Bhasha poetry are adopted in Pingal but the grammatical structure is of Braj Bhasha or akin to it.” (History of Rajasthani Literature, 1980, p.8)

Rajasthan ka Pingal Sahitya (in Hindi) by Dr Moti Lal Menaria presents a short but systematic history of Brajbhasha poetry composed by the poets of Rajasthan. According to Dr Menaria, the use of word ‘Pingal’ in the sense of Brajbhasha is not too old. In the 18th century,

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this began to be used in this sense and comes to be seen for the first time, perhaps, in *Bachitra Natak*. For instance, “Bhakha Pingal di”. (*Dasam Granth*, p. 197).

It is true that the word ‘Pingal’ has been used in the *Ram-Avtar* part of *Bachitra Natak Granth*, but it was not for the first time, as claimed by Dr Menaria.. In fact, ‘Pingal’ had come into use in the sense of a language long before this in Rajasthani literature. In *Naag-daman* composed (about 1604 AD) by Sanya Jhula, a Charan poet, both words *dingal* and *pingal* have been used in the sense of languages. For instance,

(ਛੰਦ ਭੁਜੰਗ-ਪ੍ਰਯਾਤ)

ਊੜੈ ਡੀਗਲਾ ਪੰਗਲਾ ਰਾ ਅੰਗਾਰਾ,
ਅਧੀਰਾਜ ਮਾਰਾ ਉਵੈ ਕੀਧ ਆਰਾ ।
ਕਾਨ੍ਹਾ ਰਾ ਕਰਾਰਾ ਖਮੈ ਹਾਥ ਖਾਰਾ,
ਵੇਛੀ ਨਾਵ ਧਾਰਾ ਵਹੈ ਵਾਰਵਾਰਾ ॥ (੧੦੩)

i.e., receiving beating from Lord Krishna, it (the serpent) cried out in distress and began to utter fiery words of Dingal and Pingal. Bearing the strikes given by Lord Krishna, Kaliya (the serpent) was swimming like a light boat in the current of water. (see, *Naag-daman*, edited by Mool Chand Pranesh, 2002, p. 88)

In this survey of Pingal literature, Dr Menaria has also described such a work titled *Triya Vinod* which seems similar to *Charitropakhyan** from the view-point of style. Its author is a poet named Murali who was patronized by Rawat Udaibhan of Kotharia estate in Mewar (Udaipur) kingdom. The *granth*, *Triya Vinod* was composed by him for Rawat Udaibhan Chauhan, the feudatory of Kotharia.

Triya Vinod is a voluminous *granth*. It comprises 1581 *chhands*. It was composed in Samvat 1763 Bk (1707 AD). It describes the story of the lewd wife of a wealthy merchant named Sripal of Madanpuri. The story is imaginary. There are many tales and subordinate-tales

* *Charitropakhyan* is a Brajbhasha poetry covering 580 pages of Dasam Granth. About four hundred *charitra* stories are described in its 404 episodes. Most of the stories are connected with women’s guiles, and hence this work is also called *Triya Charitra*. As per the information given in the concluding verse of this work, it was composed in Samvat 1753 Bk, i.e., in 1697 AD. *Charitropakhyan* means tales delineating wileful characters. Due to its tales of questionable relations between men and women, this poetic composition is much-discussed in the Sikh academic world. Dr Rattan Singh Jaggi has regarded its place in Hindi literature as unique because any work in Hindi literature written in the style of *Charitropakhyan* had not been available to him. (see, *Dasam Granth ki Pauranik Prishthbhumi*, 1965, p. 336)

within it, in which the character of wanton women has been described. This *granth* is in Brajbhasha influenced by Rajasthani. It is interesting and entertaining, though the theme lacks depth of thought.

The learned author, while describing the Pingal literature of Rajasthan in the book under review, has put special emphasis on its historical aspect, and has also presented specimens of poems where considered necessary. First chapter of the book throws light on the linguistic characteristics of Dingal and Pingal alongwith the background of the subject. The fall of Brajbhasha as a literary language in the present time has been discussed in the concluding chapter. Brajbhasha is disappearing today from the panorama of literary creation despite its poetic qualities; and for this, the author blames those poets also who had been singing the songs of the love-acts of Radha and Krishna and the eulogies of kings and feudatories, but did not perform their duties conforming to the times or share sorrows with common people.

It is true that Brajbhasha is now out of use for literary creation, but there was a time when it was established as the premier literary language of Rajasthan. The poets of all states, big and small, felt proud of writing poems in Brajbhasha. Thousands of *grants* composed by these poets are still extant in various manuscript-libraries in Rajasthan and require to be studied.

This book by Dr Motilal Menaria is helpful to further the research work on Pingal literature. It may also help identify the literary tradition of Brajbhasha poetry like *Charitropakhyan* and determine its place in Hindi literature.



*In the brief night of life is wealth hoarded.
With dawn comes departure hence.
Saith Nanak :
This goes not with man, leaving him only full of regrets.*

– Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 787

ਰਾਤਿ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਧਨੁ ਸੰਚੀਐ ਭਲਕੇ ਚਲਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਲਿ ਨ ਚਲਈ ਫਿਰਿ ਪਛਤਾਵਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

SCRAMBLE FOR PUNJAB WATERS

A REVIEW BY GURCHARAN SINGH*

Author : Gurdev Singh, IAS (retd)

Publisher : Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh

Pages : 76; Price : Rs. 50/-, \$3, £2

Water is the most important basic resource, a limiting factor, for development. S. Gurdev Singh's book clearly brings out how since the creation of the reorganised State of Punjab, systematic efforts have been made and are still continuing to deny the Punjab State of its rightful use of its waters by clear infringement of the constitutional rights of the state. The author has aptly named the book *Scramble for Punjab Waters*.

The book has been divided into nine chapters, with an epilogue and three very useful appendices. Chapter one deals with the constitutional matters, which explicitly give control of intra-state river waters with the states. "The constitution of India even bars the Parliament from legislating over intra-state-rivers." It is highly appropriate here to reproduce the considered view of the Joint Parliament Committee while drafting the legislation in its report on settlement of inter-state water disputes.

"The effect of this is to give each Province complete powers over water supplies within the province without any regard whatsoever to the interests of the neighbouring Provinces." Framers of the constitution were, as S. Gurdev Singh says, "Fully conscious that the disputes relating to the interstate rivers are loaded with such complexities and emotions that would not be amenable to resolution through the courts... Consequently the constitution kept such disputes outside the jurisdiction of the courts including the Supreme Court." "Rivers fall under the legislative control of the state in which they lie, and such rivers are

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706, Sector 11, Chandigarh

beyond the legislative ambit of the union.” Ravi, Beas and Sutlej rivers are Punjab rivers, then why the continuing scramble?

Chapter two deals with the historic background and the fact that both Haryana and Rajasthan states are not riparian to the Ravi, Beas, and the Sutlej rivers. The division of India into two countries, India and Pakistan, resulted in the division of the pre-partition Punjab State into west Punjab (Pakistan) and East Punjab (India) in 1947. The river waters dispute between India and Pakistan was settled in September 1960 by signing the Indus Water Treaty. Thereafter, the state of Punjab had exclusive water rights of the eastern rivers of Ravi and Beas. Punjab, at that time, was also riparian to river Yamuna. The state of Punjab was further reorganised with effect from November 1, 1966, creating a new state of Haryana and enlarging the existing Himachal Pradesh state after merging a big chunk of hilly areas of Punjab in it. The state of Haryana continued to be riparian to Yamuna river, and the Ravi, Beas and the Sutlej rivers continued to be intra-state rivers of Punjab.

Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966 is dealt with in Chapter three. Although the Constitution of India does not permit the Union to legislate on intra-state rivers, yet by inclusion of section 78 in the said Act, the Government of India un-constitutionally took over the powers of allocation of river waters between Punjab and Haryana. Details have been given about the allocation of water under the assumed powers under section 78 of Punjab Reorganisation Act. On March 24, 1976, an award (Notification) was given by the Govt. of India. According to this award, the Punjab state was allocated 3.5 million acre feet (MAF) of the remaining water of Beas and Ravi, the state of Jammu and Kashmir got 0.65 MAF, while Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi got 11.7 MAF. Interestingly, while Section 78 of the Act deals with division of assets and liabilities of the pre-reorganised State of Punjab among its successor states, the water allocation notification included Rajasthan and Delhi also which are not successor states.

The award was not acceptable to the State of Punjab, which during 1979 under the then Akali Government in Punjab, filed a suit (no. 2 of 1979) with the Supreme Court of India challenging the award (Notification) and also the vires of Section 78 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966. However, on 31 December 1981, the Govt. of India, as the author says, “hammered out an ‘agreement’ amongst the Chief Ministers of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan.”

On the signing of the Agreement, the case pending in the Supreme Court (Suit No. 2, 1979) was withdrawn, and to take these extra waters

to Haryana, a Sutlej Yamuna Link canal (SYL) was to be dug. The Prime Minister of India came to Village Kapuri in district Patiala to inaugurate the digging of the Canal in April 1982. This Agreement was not acceptable to Punjab and a vigorous agitation, known as Nehar Roko was launched. This led to an 'Accord' called the "Rajiv Longowal Accord" of July 24, 1985 which suppressed the Agreement of 3rd December, 1981 between the Chief Ministers. On November 5, 1985 the Punjab Legislative Assembly also rejected the Agreement.

The relevant clauses of the 'Accord' have been given in the book. A tribunal was to be set up and to give it a legal status, section 14 was added to the Inter-state River Water Disputes Act 1956 specifically for the Ravi and Beas rivers of Punjab (Note that these rivers are not interstate rivers). The Tribunal, which was set up in April 1986, gave its interim report in January 1987. The Punjab Government made an application to the Tribunal on August 19, 1987. No decision has been made on that as yet.

The Chapter gives further details of the Suit filed by the State of Haryana, in the Supreme Court to force the state of Punjab to complete the SYL Canal. The Supreme Court on January 15, 2002 ordered that the canal be made functional in a year's time.

It may be noted that once the Punjab Legislature rejected the Agreement of 1981 in November 1985 there is nothing to be enforced with regard to the distribution of waters. Then what for the Canal ?

The Punjab Govt in January 2003 filed a suit (no. 1 of 2003) in the Supreme Court seeking discharge and dissolution of the injunction issued against it in January 2002, has challenged the vires of Section 78 of Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966 which empowers the Govt. of India (against the Constitutional Provision) to distribute Punjab waters to non-riparian states, and also the vires of Section 14 of Inter-state Water Disputes Act 1956. That is where the SYL canal case stands today.

Briefly, while reorganising Punjab State, a Section 78 was added to enable Govt of India to intercede in the matter of river waters distribution between Punjab and Haryana States. In March 1976 a Notification was issued by the Government of India allocating Ravi and Beas waters to Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, J&K and Punjab. The Punjab Govt. filed a suit against it in September 1979. The Notification was superceded by an Agreement hammered between the allottees in December 1981. The suit was withdrawn. This led to an agitation in Punjab starting from Kapuri village in Patiala. It was followed by an

‘Accord’ (Rajiv and Longowal) The Agreement of December 1981 was repudiated by the Punjab legislative Assembly on 5 November 1985. By inserting clause 78 in the Reorganisation Act, the scramble for Punjab waters was started and is still going on.

Legally the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas belong to the state of Punjab. On technical grounds also there is no justification for the transfer of water outside the state of Punjab. The water resources comprise of canal water, ground water and rainfall. These sources are inter-linked and interdependent. A comprehensive study was made by the Punjab Agricultural University in 1991 and updated in 1993 on the total water available and its need. The total water requirements were estimated at 39.7 MAF on the basis of normative water use by the crops raised at that time. The total water available was estimated at 25.3MAF excluding unfit and marginally fit ground water. This was worked out on the basis of total water available at all the canal water outlets, groundwater based on rainfall infiltration, seepage from canals, return flow from surface irrigation, seepage from rivers, *choes* and flood plain. Thus the supplies are short by about 14 MAF. The area under crops has increased since the assessment made in 1993. The paddy area has increased by about six lakh hectares. The situation has, therefore, deteriorated further. The situation is already very serious, and will further deteriorate with transfer of additional river water.

It is also important to note that the water use efficiency, as reflected in the per hectare yield of crops, is higher in Punjab than the adjoining states.

The average yield of rice in Punjab was reported to be 3465 kg/ha during 1997-98 compared to 2800 kg in Haryana. The irrigated rice area was 99% in both these states. Rajasthan during 1998-99 registered a yield of 2487 kg/ha of wheat compared to 4332 kg/ha achieved in Punjab. The irrigated wheat area in Rajasthan was 96% and about 98% in Punjab. * (*Source: Agricultural statistics at a glance 2000. Deptt. of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India.) Why such a valuable source of water be put to inefficient use?

On technical and viability issues Sardar Gurdev Singh has very nicely observed: “The rivers Ravi, Beas and Sutlej lie in that part of the country which is called Punjab. Because of drainage gradient of these rivers and Punjab lands being in their proximity in their drainage basins, these constitute most suitable and viable tract of India for the use of waters of these rivers. Punjab lands can be irrigated much more

economically and for much higher productivity with the water of these rivers than what their use in any other part of the country would achieve."

"ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ" Nature has blessed the Punjab State with priceless gift of water. The Indian Constitution clearly allocates river waters to the exclusive legislative powers of the state. It is our responsibility and duty to defend our constitutional rights with regard to the usage of waters of the Punjab rivers. Sardar Gurdev Singh rendered a great service to the cause of the Punjab state in its fight against unconstitutional exploitation of its only natural resource, by non-riparian neighbour. The IOSS also deserves credit for timely bringing out this valuable publication.

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*Those to whom Guru Nanak himself has illumination
By his teaching granted,
And in truth and holy laudation has absorbed –
What further teaching to such need be imparted ?
What teaching to such as have the holy Nanak as their
Preceptor ?*

– Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 150

ਦੀਖਿਆ ਆਖਿ ਬੁਝਾਇਆ ਸਿਫਤੀ ਸਚਿ ਸਮੇਉ ॥
ਤਿਨ ਕਉ ਕਿਆ ਉਪਦੇਸੀਐ ਜਿਨ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਉ ॥

THE KHALSA

A REVIEW BY I J SINGH*

*Author : Prithipal Singh Kapur and Dharam Singh
Publisher : Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala
First Edition 1999
Pages : 150; Price : Rs. 180/-*

Despite minor quibbling over historical detail it is universally agreed that the Khalsa discipline was revealed fully 300 years ago on Vaisakhi 1699. This event was the crowning glory in an uninterrupted unfolding of the 500-year-old message of Guru Nanak. One would think that the essential features of the history and the events in the manifestation of the Khalsa would be clear by now, accepted beyond doubt and ambiguity. In fact by now we should be focused on the meaning of the message rather than on its mechanism.

When in Guru Nanak's time Sikhism initially started to evolve into an institution, some fences between it and the other Indian religions extant at that time became apparent. With time additional borders between Sikhism and institutions of neighboring religions necessarily developed. It is in this light that the distinct identity of the Khalsa needs to be seen. Why is it then that there are credible writers like P K Nijhawan or Bhai Mahavir who strive mightily to deny the house of Nanak its independent existence? Or, for that matter, look at the currently piquant situation created by the Hindu Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh with its government supported efforts to erase the lines that delineate Sikhism from Hinduism. Professors Kapur and Dharam Singh handle this issue well. They argue quite convincingly that the Hindu mind recognizes its historical debt to Sikhism and that without Sikhism Hinduism would not have survived. But Hinduism finds it difficult to accept and acknowledge such an onerous debt to a movement that is separate and distinct from it. Hence the age-old efforts to recast Guru Nanak as an

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incarnation of Vishnu and Sikh philosophy as an elegant restatement of Hindu beliefs.

The book consists of only six essays that competently span the gamut of historical detail and the philosophic interpretations that have shaped Sikh ethos over the past three centuries. Each essay carries a useful list of references. The first chapter covers very tersely the development of Sikh faith from Guru Nanak to the times and life of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Though brief, this essay convincingly lays to rest some of the oft-heard canards about the martyrdom of the fifth and ninth Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh had fought most of his battles before the creation of the Khalsa; therefore, the Khalsa, as the authors point out, was not formed merely to fight battles. The political imperatives of the minor rulers and satraps of the hill states are analyzed in light of the strategic vision of Guru Gobind Singh. The presentation of the events of that historic Vaisakhi hews to traditional accounts. What is more important is that the few historical contradictions in the exact events that took place on Vaisakhi of 1699 that exist in the record are ably probed and examined. The continuity and consistency of Sikh belief and tradition are well explored and emphasized.

The views of Hew McLeod and Jagjit Singh on the influx of Jats into Sikhism around the time of Guru Arjun's martyrdom are discussed. Demographics of Punjab and the mixing of the Jat and non-Jat community of that time are invoked and in the main Jagjit Singh's logic is supported. But in this matter one thing has always baffled me in the reasoning of both Hew McLeod and Jagjit Singh, and now in these authors as well. Even if we agree that there was a great influx of Jats in the Sikhs at that time, I wonder why and how it happened. It certainly did not occur overnight because of the Guru's martyrdom. It seems to me that even before the martyrdom Jats must have not been unaware or unmoved by Sikhism and its message and, in fact, must have been deeply attracted to it. In other words, their attachment to Sikhism must have already been considerable. They were Punjabis and could not have remained ignorant or unaffected by the message that sprang from the Gurus of Punjab. They did not suddenly discover the beauty of Sikhism. But it should surprise no one that after the martyrdom of Sikhism their attachment to the house of Nanak became stronger. It was not that their coming into Sikhism changed Sikhism but that they came into Sikhism because it satisfied their urgings, needs and aspirations. It was the Jats who were transformed by Sikhism.

The authors are Professors in the Department of Encyclopaedia

of Sikhism, Punjabi University, Patiala. Parenthetically I might add that the printing and publishing of the book are first rate. It has an attractive format and is mercifully free of the typographical glitches and unattractive covers that often adorn books produced in India. I also noticed that only 500 copies were published. Is it possible that a country of a billion people, including 20 million Sikhs and heaven knows how many universities would have so few people with an interest in reading?



*This world is the holy Lord's chamber; in it is His abode
 Some by His command into Himself He absorbs;
 Some by His command He destroys.
 Some by His will from Maya He extricates;
 Some into Maya He keeps absorbed.
 Impossible it is to say whose endeavour He shall approve.
 Saith Nanak : Such alone are the God-directed.
 As by Himself are enlightened.*

— Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 463

ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਰੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥
 ਇਕਨਾ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸਮਾਇ ਲਏ ਇਕਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਕਰੇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥
 ਇਕਨਾ ਭਾਣੈ ਕਛਿ ਲਏ ਇਕਨਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਵਿਚਿ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ॥
 ਏਵ ਭਿ ਆਖਿ ਨਾ ਜਾਪਈ ਜਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਆਣੈ ਰਾਸਿ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਕਉ ਆਪਿ ਕਰੇ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ ॥

SIKH COINAGE : SYMBOL OF SIKH SOVEREIGNTY

A REVIEW BY HARDEV SINGH*

Author : Surinder Singh

Publisher : Manohar, Delhi

Price : Rs. 995/-; Pages 283

The author of *Sikh Coinage : Symbol of Sikh Sovereignty*, is a retired civil servant who received his Ph D degree from the Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata after his retirement on his dissertation, *Studies in Sikh Coinage*. The book is an extended version of his Ph D thesis. The objectives of the study have been defined in the introduction of the book : i) to identify the discrepancies and distortions in the existing accounts on Sikh coinage, ii) to investigate and analyse the reasons for these distortions, iii) to present the correct picture emerging from the study of relevant Sikh history, and , iv) to highlight the uniqueness of the Sikh coins as a symbol of Sikh sovereignty. The author has used both primary and secondary sources to unravel the distortions created by historians and numismatists about the Sikh coinage. A vast bibliography at the end of the book illustrates the erudition and scholarly labour involved in this venture.

Dr Surinder Singh, the author of *Sikh Coinage* has published over thirty research papers and is an expert in the field of numismatics. He is working on the concept of Sikh sovereignty as a Senior Fellow of Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi. He has combined his historical knowledge, political acumen, expertise in numismatics with scientific and analytical technique to produce this monumental work in Sikh literature.

The study of Sikh coinage has been divided into four periods which comprise the first four chapters of the book. The first chapter deals with the initial Sikh coinage issued under Banda Bahadur's command during his rule in Punjab from 1710 to 1715. The second

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chapter deals with the coinage of the *misl* period from 1765-1795 AD. The third chapter describes the Sikh coinage of glorious period of Sikh history, namely, the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh from 1800-1839 AD. The fourth chapter is based on the post Ranjit Singh period from 1839-1849. All these chapters are fully illustrated with plates showing the obverse and reverse faces of Sikh coinage. The motifs on the coins are critically examined by the author to remove fallacies and historical distortions created by European and Indian historians.

Banda Bahadur made an official seal with the legend '*Degh, Tegh, Fateh O Nusrat Baidarang, Yaft uz Nanak Guru Gobind Singh*'. This very legend was taken up on the Sikh coin struck in AD 1765 to commemorate the occupation of Lahore, the capital of Punjab, by the Sikh armies. This legend reflects the concept of Sikh sovereignty. Its meaning is that the free *langar*, the strength of the sword arm and the resultant victory were the result of the spontaneous help received from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. I appreciate the interpretation by the author of the phrase 'Nanak Guru Gobind Singh' as the entire Sikh Gurudom and not as 'Guru Gobind Singh received from Guru Nanak', the interpretation used by a galaxy of historians. Most historians have written about Sikh coins without actually examining them; this negligence is in total violation of the requisite norms of numismatic investigation. A number of such fallacies have been exposed by the author using his critical analysis.

Since coins are the most important and primary symbol of sovereignty, any distortion of their history results in the distortion of the concept of sovereignty. The author has refuted the claim of several eminent historians of Europe and India that coins were struck in the name of Moran (the dancing girl) by Ranjit Singh. How can he carry such a sacrilege as to mint coins in the name of a concubine whom he eventually discarded after a few years? He has also ruled out that coins were issued by Hari Singh Nalwa in the capacity of his being a Governor of Kashmir. How could he have taken over symbol of sovereignty invested with the Khalsa and the Sikh Gurus? He himself was a jealous guardian of Sikh commonwealth created by Ranjit Singh. The author claims that C J Rodgers and his tribe of European historians are responsible for spreading disinformation, whether deliberately or inadvertently, on Sikh coinage which resulted in the distortion of Sikh history. Most of our Indian historians including Ganda Singh, Khushwant Singh, J S Grewal, *et al* followed in their footsteps and came to wrong conclusions without concrete numismatic evidence.

The author has exposed the plagiarism indulged in by some Indian historians and their publishers and extracted an unconditional apology from one on page 44 of his book, a very bold step indeed to check this malpractice !

The most important feature that emerges out of this unique study of Sikh coinage is the deep-rooted dedication of the Sikhs to their Gurus and their teachings. Guru Gobind Singh vested his temporal sovereignty in the Khalsa Panth but when the Khalsa became the masters of large areas of Punjab, they struck coins in the name and praise of their Gurus. They became the *de facto* temporal rulers, but the *de jure* temporal sovereignty still vested with the Gurus. Puran Singh calls it the ideal Khalsa commonwealth in his *Spirit of the Sikh*. Sikh coins are not merely a symbol, but also a mirror image of the concept of Sikh sovereignty. Will the modern day Akali Sikh leadership learn a lesson to follow in the footsteps of Khalsa who once ruled in Punjab?

Numismatic investigations show that the minting of Sikh coins began from the Lahore mint in AD 1765 / 1822 BK Samvat and continued till AD 1849, when Punjab was annexed to the British Empire. Sikh coins were also minted at Amritsar, Multan, Anandpur and some other places by Sikh *sardars*. The leaf motif on Sikh coins is widely inscribed on the Amritsar coin of AD 1788. The author has given his unique explanation of leaf motifs and exploded the myth of Moran's coins. Sikh coins are generally classified as Nanakshahi and the author rules out Moranshahi or Gobindshahi coins as misnomers. Nanakshahi rupee coins were minted out of pure silver, and were rated higher than other currencies in India.

The learned author has also described the coinage of cis-Satluj states, particularly Nabha and Patiala. While Nabha rulers following the mainstream of the Sikhs issued Nanakshahi coins, the Patiala dynasty of rulers minted Durrani also called Rajashahi coins till 1893 and then reverted to British Indian currency. However, they issued Guru Sahib coins only for *puja* ceremonies and not for treasury. The author has also shown some Mughal coins in Plate III countermarked with the Sikh *Khanda* ensign. It is presumed that the Sikhs might have counter marked the Mughal coins with *Khanda* between 1772 and 1833 in order to treat it as Sikh currency. After the death of Ranjit Singh the Khalsa state crumbled and the Brahminical influence increased. During this period, Brahminical symbols such as the Trishul, Om, Chhattar, Sat and Shiva started appearing on the Sikh coins. Sikh sovereignty itself was under severe attack both from inside and outside

and its symbolic violation appeared on coins. Shiploads of Sikh coins were dispatched to Bombay and Calcutta mints for conversion to British Indian currency after the annexation of Punjab.

The book devotes a full chapter to *Sikh coins as a symbol of Sikh Sovereignty*, followed by six appendices. The author finds discrepancies in all historical accounts regarding Sikh coinage. I hope some future numismatist will try to find some discrepancy in author's account also, which is a sign of progress. At the present, I can point out glaring spelling mistakes only, e.g Sikkism (page. 209), spescial (p. 231), Phul Sandhu Jat (p. 260) instead of Sikhism, specially and Phul Sidhu Jat. The price of Rs. 995 may seem high but the two silver (?) coins impregnated on the title page as memento may copensate the readers.

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*Attachment formed with the immature never is fruitful.
Try and test : As is someone's understanding,
Such shall his conduct be.
In the Supreme Reality is the self absorbed,
When duality gets smashed.
With the Master is not commanding effective;
Right it is to make supplication.
By practice of falsehood shall evil grow.
Saith Nanak : Divine laudation in joy shall result.*

– Guru Angad Dev, GGS, p. 474

ਨਾਲਿ ਇਆਣੇ ਦੈਸਤੀ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਰਾਮਿ ॥
ਜੇਹਾ ਜਾਣੈ ਤੇਹੋ ਵਰਤੈ ਵੇਖਹੁ ਕੋ ਨਿਰਜਾਮਿ ॥
ਵਸਤੂ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਵਸਤੂ ਸਮਾਵੈ ਦੂਜੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥
ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੇਤੀ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਕਹੀ ਬਣੈ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥
ਕੁੱਝ ਕਮਾਣੈ ਕੂੜੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਵਿਗਾਸਿ ॥

NEWS & VIEWS

INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES, CHANDIGARH PRESS RELEASE

Chandigarh, 27 February, 2004. At the annual seminar held on Nov. 15-16, 2003 organised by the Institute of Sikh Studies, in Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Kanthala, Chandigarh, it was unanimously felt that there is a need for creating an Apex Body for the Sikh Panth to deal with problems and to provide guidance and direction to the community in its march towards progress. The SGPC was requested to take the required initiative for creating this Body with representatives of all major Panthic Organisations and Sikhs from across the world with itself as nucleus under the patronage of the Akal Takht Sahib.

As a follow up of this resolve, the Institute of Sikh Studies convened a meeting of its members and representatives of some other like-minded Panthic Organisations to further progress this issue. Representatives from Institutes / Organisations, attended this meeting.

Having discussed the need for an Apex Body in great detail, the enclosed resolution was passed wherein an appeal was made to all Sikh Organisations in India and abroad to cooperate in the discharge of this historic responsibility for the glory of the Panth and to achieve the goals of *Sarbat da Bhalla*.

In order to implement this recommendation an Action Committee was constituted with following members :-

Giani Harinder Singh, President, Kendri Singh Sabha, Chandigarh
Brig Gurdip Singh, Member, Sikh Core Group
Dr Rajinder Singh Bajwa, Guru Nanak Trust, Washington DC, USA
Dr Kharak Singh, Member, Institute of Sikh Studies
Lt Gen Kartar Singh Gill, Member, Institute of Sikh Studies
Dr Gurcharan Singh Kalkat, Member, Institute of Sikh Studies.
Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle, Ludhiana
Delli Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee

Sardar Amrinder Singh, Member, SGPC

Col Dr Rajinder Singh, President, Gurdwara Sector 34, Chandigarh

Sardar Angrez Singh, President, Pind Bachao Committee, Chandigarh

Action Committee would arrange larger gatherings so as to progressively encompass various Sikh Organisations / Scholars in India and abroad. This Committee would also approach the SGPC to take the lead from here onwards to handle and progress this vital issue. The following resolution was adopted unanimously :

“Representatives of some major Sikh Organisations gathered at the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, have noted with great concern that the Panth is passing through a crisis. This crisis is marked by disunity, challenge to Sikh identity and established Institutions like the Akal Takht Sahib and the SGPC, spate of apostasy, existence of chasms old and new and unnecessary controversies created to divide and weaken the Panth. But in the present set-up of the Panth, it seems difficult to meet the challenge.

“In order to deal with these problems, to carry the divine message of the Gurus world-wide and to lead the Panth to its destined glory in the service of mankind, this gathering considers it imperative to invoke the Gurus’ doctrine of Guru Granth-Guru Panth, which gives it the responsibility to take decisions in the light of teachings of the Gurus with complete faith in *Shabad* as Guru. We must have a central body of the Sikh Panth with global representation whose deliberations will guide and assist the entire Sikh community.

“The Sikhs are fortunate in having Sri Akal Takht as the Supreme seat of authority and the SGPC as an elected body of the Sikhs representing Sikh majority areas. These institutions cannot be ignored, and should rather be strengthened.

“This gathering, therefore, calls upon the SGPC to take the required initiative for creating an Apex Body, with representatives of all major Panthic organisations and Sikhs from across the world, with itself as nucleus under the patronage of Sri Akal Takht.

“This gathering also appeals to all Sikh organisations to cooperate in the discharge of this historic responsibility for the glory of the Panth and to achieve the goal of *sarbat da bhala*.

“It is further resolved that an action Committee be appointed from amongst this gathering to achieve this objective. The main function of the Committee would be to bring about awareness of this need among the masses and to persuade the leaders of various political

and religious organisations among Sikhs in India and abroad to take necessary steps to create such a Body.

"The gathering took note of the encouraging remarks of Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in his special address at the seminar held at IOSS in November, 2003. The action committee is, therefore, specially mandated to approach the SGPC to secure the desired initiative in this respect.

"This gathering also re-iterates that the proposed Apex Body will not replace any of the existing Panthic organisation, but rather strengthen them through advice, coordination and feedback."

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#### **WITHDRAW BAN ON TURBAN**

Through a resolution passed on February 21, 2004, the Institute of Sikh Studies demanded the withdrawal of the proposed French Government ban on wearing of turbans by Sikh students in schools :

"French Government's proposed ban on religious symbols including head scarves for Muslim women and turban for Sikhs and Muslims in French public schools and public places has evoked sharp protest by both the communities. There have been demonstrations by at least 10,000 people against this move in Paris as reported by *Hindustan Times* on 17 January, 2004.

"For Sikhs, unshorn hair along with turban is an article of faith and inviolable commandment. Sikh men / soldiers have worn turbans both during peace as well as the two great World Wars, and continue doing so now. Sikh women cover their heads in the same spirit. Regimes both in England and America have at times due to ignorance tried to impose these bans, but on wiser counsel scrapped the orders. It has been reported that John V Hanford, US Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, reacting against the present French move, had stated that students who wore visible religious symbol as heartfelt manifestations of their belief, have a basic right that should be protected. Former US President Bill Clinton had once said that the Constitution does not require children to leave their religion at the school house door.

"The French people who raised the banner of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are not expected to impose such a ban and snuff out the religious conscience of the Sikhs.

"Members of Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, India strongly oppose this ban and earnestly request the French Government to scrap it."

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SGPC COMPLAINT AGAINST BSNL

Amritsar, February 22. Mr Manjit Singh Calcutta, secretary, SGPC has written to Mr Arun Shourie, Union Minister of Disinvestment and Information Technology and Communications complaining the BSNL which projected Sikhs in a bad light in jokes.

The letter which was released to the press here yesterday stated that BSNL had provided a service 'Joke Line' at Ludhiana in which jokes on 'Sardar ji' were humiliation for the Sikh community.

He demanded an apology from the BSNL and punishment to persons responsible for 'ridiculing' the Sikhs. (*Courtesy : The Tribune, February 23, 2004*) [It has been stopped since then.]

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### **GURU ANGAD'S VILLAGE TO GET A HI-TECH SPORTS ACADEMY**

Bathinda, February, 19. As part of the celebrations of the 500th year of the Parkash Utsav of the second Sikh Guru, Guru Angad Dev, the Punjab Government is setting up a sports academy at village Sarainaga, the birth place of the Guru.

Disclosing this here today, Muktsar Deputy Commissioner B R Banga said that the sports academy, which will also have an international level wrestling *akhara*, would be set up at a cost of Rs 1.25 crore.

Students admitted to the academy would be provided all the facilities, besides a stipend of Rs 2000/- per month. The sports academy, he said, would help promote sports in general, especially wrestling which will benefit the youths of Muktsar, Moga, Bathinda, Mansa and Faridkot districts.

The DC said that in the 500th year of the Parkash Utsav of Guru Angad Dev, a special well-lit two-lane road connecting the village to the main Muktsar-Kotkapura road would also be constructed at a cost of Rs 20 lakh. The 44-feetwide road is being constructed on the land donated by some villagers. A special fund for setting up a gate on the main road is also being provided by the SGPC. The gate would be constructed within the next two months. (*Courtesy : Indian Express, February 20, 2004*)

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US SENATOR KERRY APOLOGISES TO SIKHS

New Delhi, February 10. Senator John Kerry, US Democratic Presidential front-runner, has regretted the "imprecision" of his remarks

in which he referred to the Sikhs as terrorists.

During a campaign speech in Oklahoma last month, Senator Kerry had linked the Sikhs with terrorism, sparking off a sharp reaction from the community all across the USA.

He is the front runner for the Democratic nomination for US President. "It has been brought to my attention that remarks I made on Saturday, January 31, have been misunderstood to imply that adherents of the Sikh faith condon terrorism:: Nothing could be farther from the truth and I regret that the imprecision of my statement led to this misunderstanding.

"I am deeply sorry for the offence caused by this comment. I was, of course, referring to specific terrorist groups, which have invoked Sikhism and committed past acts of terror in India. I realise that, like me, the vast majority of Sikhs in the USA and world-wide abhor terrorism. I also know that stereotypes, discrimination, and abuse haunt Sikh Americans living and working in this nation. Sikh Americans have made enormous and invaluable contributions to our nation for which I am exceedingly grateful," Senator Kerry said in a statement on February 6 quoted by the Washington-based Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE). — UNI (*Courtesy ; The Tribune, February 11, 2004*)

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#### SIKH CONFERENCES - 2004

A series of Sikh conferences have been organised during 2004 to educate people about Sikh heritage. The topics among others include the relevance of Guru Granth Sahib for contemporary world, Guru Granth Sahib as a juristic person, Sikhs vision of the Cosmic Order.

The conferences will be held at Mt. SAC College Walnut, CA on May 1-2, 2004; San Jose St University, San Jose, CA on May 8-9, 2004; John Oliver Auditorium, Vancouver, on May 15-16, 2004; York University, Toronto on May 22-23, 2004, Columbia University, NY on May 29-30, 2004; and George Washington University, DC on June 5-6, 2004.

There is a galaxy of more than two dozen speakers including Dr I J Singh, Dr N Muthu Mohan, Prof Kashmir Singh, Dr Neol King, Professors from Punjab, Punjabi, and Guru Nanak Dev Universities.

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TURBANATORS

Sunny's tying his third, Amitabh his first. There's even a Mr Sikh Universe on the anvil. The *pagri*'s going chic, finds Manraj Grewal

It's showing up all over. On the pages of *Vogue*, at the music awards in Monaco, on the big screen and in plenty of ads and shows on the small one. A turbaned Angad Bedi, son of former cricketer Bishan Singh Bedi, scorched the ramp for J J Vallaya's fall-winter collection and Punjab has been seeing a spate of all-turban fashion shows since.

Slowly, but surely, the *pagri* is inching its way towards the arc lights — the French government's resolution against sartorial religious displays notwithstanding.

"A *pagri* sets you apart, a big plus when you are in the business of getting noticed," says 20-year-old Bedi. New York-based hotelier Vikram Chatwal, who was picked up by *Vogue* only because of his exotic headwear, would agree.

As does Bollywood, if you go by the success of *Border*, *Gadar*, and *Legend of Bhagat Singh*. This year Sunny Deol's tying his third one for Rahul Rawail's *Jo Bole So Nihal*, and Sanjay Dutt's rolling up his for *Sarhad Paar*. Even Amitabh Bachchan will sport one as Lt Gen Jagjit Aurora in *Ab Tumhare Hawale Watan Saathiyo*, while Bedi will play the protagonist in *Anthara*, a film set against the backdrop of the 1984 riots.

The ramp has inspired many. Jaspal Sehgal, who was crowned first runner-up in Grasim Mr India 2002, still remembers the incredulous looks he got when he entered the contest. It took this business graduate from Canada all his *savoir faire* to stick on and come up trumps. "I wanted to show that a turban is no handicap in the world of glamour."

Sehgal hammered his point home by bagging the Grasim Mr Intercontinental title besides being declared the Best Dressed Male Model in Mr Tourism International in Panama. And, in doing so, inspired many like Gurmeet Gill. Last year, this 23-year-old graduate from Delhi University set up Launchers, a modelling agency, after he was shooed away from a model hunt in Delhi. "They told me to come without my *pagri*," he recalls.

Stung, he put an ad in the papers, offering a crash course for turbaned models. *Voila*, it seemed Delhi was teeming with them. "I must have received over 500 calls in a day," he grins. Today, he ferries his team of bearded hunks from one all-turban show to another while also working on a Mr Sikh Universe pageant he's planned for March.

Launchers started out by taking part in the NIFD show at Delhi in

the fall. Abhay Singh Bhamra, who was in the second batch, tells you about the stir they caused. "I was really tickled when former Miss India finalist Divya Jaitley walked up to me and said, 'You stole the show'."

"A *pagri* is no handicap, it's just another headwear that lends a regal look to heavy ethnic wear," feels designer Aki Narula.

Now Bhamra, a 25-year-old call centre executive, has auditioned for anchoring Star TV's rural news programme *Mera Gaon Mera Desh*. Jaskirat Reikhy, a BSc (Hons) student who shelled out Rs 20,000 for Launchers' 10-day crash course, was picked up by Gurinder Chadha for a bit role in *Bride and Prejudice*. "Can you imagine, we got to dance with Aishwarya," he grins. Friend Daljit Singh has been cast in a music video by Balkar Sidhu, while another has done a BSNL print ad.

The *pagri*'s junior version — the *patka* — is not to be left behind either. Chubby boys are selling Marutis, detergents, mobiles and more.

Director Anil Sharma, who proved the commercial viability of a turban in Bollywood by casting a Sikh hero in *Border* and *Gadar*, feels that Sikhs represent India. That's flattering, but Sehgal warns about the turban's limitations in the ad world. "Be pragmatic. The advertiser has to keep his target audience in mind, and Punjabis don't really make up India, do they?"

The turbanators don't mind so long they get their share of the glam pie. (*Courtesy : An E-mail from Sardar Ishwinder Singh<ishwinder@sancharnet.in>*)

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#### **NISHKAM SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PROFESSIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS 2004**

On behalf of the 'Sikh Human Development Foundation, Inc. U.S.A', the 'Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council (Regd), invites applications for scholarships (up to Rs. 15,000/- per year) from students pursuing professional courses (like Engg. IT, Medical, Nursing, Home Science, Agriculture, Business Management, CA, etc.) in recognized colleges and universities. Eligibility: Minimum 60% marks and average family income not exceeding Rs. 10,000/- per month. Victims of social upheavals (like 1984 riots) and natural calamities will get preference. Contact Nishkam's office at Nishkam Bhawan, B-Block, Tilak Vihar, New Delhi-110018 (Ph: 25412601, 25101848)' or by e-mail at [nishkamsewa@eth.net](mailto:nishkamsewa@eth.net) for free application forms. Duly filled application forms together with documentary evidence must reach Nishkam's office

by 30th April, 2004. Eligible candidates will be required to take a written test in Punjabi & Religion and Moral Science, which will be held at New Delhi, Chandigarh, Ludhiana & Amritsar on Saturday, the 22nd May, 2004 and interview in New Delhi at a date to be notified later.

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From the Readers

AN EPISODE REMEMBERED WHO CAN REPRESENT SIKHS ? A PARADOX

Dear Editor,

Sometime after the 1984 massacre of the Sikhs, Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, visited Washington DC to meet the President of USA. The Sikh community was extremely hurt and angry because the Sikhs were tortured, murdered and burnt alive in the Congress – ruled states. This happened even in Delhi before the very eyes of Rajiv Gandhi, rather, some interpret, according to his wishes. Many, if not most of them, who were killed were Congress supporters, the reason for their being target was their un-cut beard and turban.

The Washington Sikhs including those in the adjacent parts of Maryland and Virginia states decided to conduct a protest meeting near the White House and present a memorandum to Rajiv. The President of Maryland Gurdwara *sangat* which represented the Sikh community was naturally to present the memorandum. Some Sikhs pointed out the paradox, “How can he with no beard or turban on his head, represent Sikhs to lodge a protest for killing those just because they wore turban and beard.”

Maryland Gurdwara management did not agree to choose one of the *Amritdhari* (or even *Keshdhari*) Sikhs of Virginia, because they were in a great minority. Maryland Gurdwara committee did realize the paradox and agreed to nominate a turbaned Sikh for presenting the memorandum. The paradox remained un-resolved; their nominee did wear turban but trimmed his beard. He, too, could not justifiably represent the hurt feelings of the Sikhs. Virginia Sikhs (*Amritdhari*) were considered not qualified to be representative of the Sikhs because they were a small minority group. Result : Sikhs could not present any memorandum to protest the massacre of the innocent Sikhs in 1984, whose only fault was their turban and beard. Does it leave any doubt

about who is a Sikh ?

Gurbakhsh Singh USA

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Dear Editor

This is with reference to the letter titled R S S Shaurya Samaroh Today, at serial number 33. Before the last sentence in this piece, kindly add a new para.

"By publically honouring 600 fake heroes, including the sons and grandsons of those who had since died, perhaps the RSS was writing history showing themselves as victors of the then Abdalis. Sooner than later, if not already done, the narration will appear in school text books. Such is the alchemy of power in India that turns counterfeits into genuine articles".

My profound regards and fateh.

Karnail Singh  
Canada

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WHERE IS YOUR DASTAAR ?

Dear Editor

Whenever we look back at our history, we find someone to blame. We find someone who made a mistake. We find the coward who succumbed to fear or domination. We find the traitor who went for greener pastures.

Whenever we talk about our Gurus, we talk of the high ideals. We talk about how we should never stand for second best, rather live up these ideals. We talk of *shaheedis*, we praise the warriors, the soldiers, the Khalsa.

Whenever we tell our kids about what we think they need to know, we tell them to find good *sangat*, to look for good examples, but most of all believe in the Guru. We tell them that they need to make a niche for themselves, never giving in to pressure, yet always respecting others.

Whenever we praise someone's efforts, we tell them to persevere in them, not quit, to remain in *Charhdi Kala*. We tell them that with the guru's *kirpaa*, they have been chosen to take initiative, the lead, the fore—and they must not disappoint the *panth*.

Whenever we introspect and say that we "Chose to be a Sikh", we mean it was a conscious decision, not some birth right, but a way of

life we have adopted. Not something forced down our throats, rather an acceptance of the *Hukum*.

Whenever we need to tell the world, our kids, and ourselves, why thousands of Sikhs vanished, we find plenty of reasons and plenty of culprits. Some of us have different ideas, but we find many people to lay the blame on faulty leadership, an eerie conspiracy, heinous acts out of jealousy, and insecurity.

We are going to commemorate events from 20 years ago, but are we forgetting what is happening in our midst, only an ocean away, in our very lifetime? Is the threat to people who we believe to be a part of the valuable *panth* small, because it is not happening to us? Or is it small because they will not be burnt, raped or murdered, just shorn of their *dastaars*? Has it always been empty rhetoric when we said, “I’d rather lose my head than my *dastaar*.” If it is just something we say to make us feel good, then let us stop now.

If you disagree then what about the 5000 brothers or sisters an ocean away—aren’t they going to be beheaded! Does it not matter to us because they are only 5000 Sikhs there? Then why do we make the mighty statements of “one person oppressed, is one too many!”

I don’t really see how we can make our kids sing “We are the Khalsa” or scream *jaikaaraas* of “Raj karegaa...”, when kids of other Sikhs are not even being allowed in schools!

I don’t see the point of telling people about 1984, when we can’t take interest in what is happening in 2004! When we become a part of our history, and we already are, because every day becomes history right when the sun sets, young Sikh children today and future generations will point fingers at us and say “they were too busy to worry about the community’s welfare...” At that time we will have no one to blame but ourselves. Who can we blame for not noticing the grace that the Guru has bestowed on us by making us aware of this injustice. We are blessed to be living comfortably in a country where we can voice our concern at the fate of Sikhs in France without risking our necks.

We are callous enough to sometimes blame people who (while their thighs were being pulled apart, nails torn out and genitals shocked) blurted secrets that got many of their comrades killed. Yet we really don’t find time to at least tell the world that we, the Sikhs, do exist and do care about other Sikhs, all around the world.

What’s the use of us planning changes in the land ruled by severe oppression, when we can’t make small efforts—the click of a mouse, the dialing of a phone, the writing of a letter—sitting in the land where

we are safe and have rights?

Erroneous, discriminatory and hatred ridden thinking catches like wildfire. Are we so dense that we have already forgotten this? While we make plans to make people remember the mistakes of the past and always quote “those who forget their history, are bound to repeat it”, we are neglecting the present. Is this really what the Gurus taught?

I don't think I can look another child in the eye, knowing that there is the possibility that on a “study abroad program for foreign language development” to Europe while she is in college, she might be singled out, taken out of line, and asked to remove her “headgear.”

I feel we are giving in too easy. “It's a political issue, don't get too involved,” is a very shameful thing for one Sikh to say to another! Sikhs are a political people. When did the Guru ask us to be apolitical? It feels pathetic to tell people that Sikhs carry *kirpaans* to defend the defenseless, when they can't help their own sisters and brothers in need.

Sikhaan di Matt uuchii

Sikhaan nu Sikhi daan, Kesh daan, bibek daan, visaah daan

Sarbat da bhala

I don't see how we can even say our most important *ardaaas* when we are living under the threat of losing our identity.

This is a worrying matter. And I am bent on making you worry. I neither want you or myself, to be one of the many cowards, traitors, hypocrites, liars, that our children will look down at tomorrow. If this comes to any kid in France or elsewhere saying “*dada*, what happened to your *dastaar*?” Shame not on those who were or those who will be.

Shame on us!

Mallika Kaur
Studying in USA

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### AMAZING !

Dear Editor,

On Pg. 111 of *Sikh Identity : Continuity and Change* by Pashaura Singh and N G Barrier, Harbans Lal quotes Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, on *Sahajdhari* Sikhs from *Mahan Kosh* (Pg. 845). The quote is as follows :

“There are two prominent meanings of the term *Sahaj-dhari* – *sahaj*

(*gyan*) *dharan wala*, scholar, *sukhali dharan wala* meaning follower of the tranquil codes of living, a part of the Sikhs who do not take *khande da amrit* and do not keep the *rahit* of *kachha* or *kirpan* but do not accept any scripture other than Sri Guru Granth Sahib as their guide. Also they performed all social ceremonies according to Sikh rites and refrained from *kurahits* (forbidden acts) such as eating of *kutha* and consumption of tobacco. It is thus clear that traditionally, the Sikhs whether they kept *keshas* (un-tampered hair) or not but if they had not been baptized were all *sahaj-dharis*. There is a large population of *sahajdhari* Sikhs in the states of Punjab and Sindh. *Sahajdhari* particularly from Sindh are very devout believers of Sikhism. Those Sikhs who look down upon the *sahajdhari* Sikhs are ignorant of the Sikh religion."

Cross-verifying from the given page in *Mahan Kosh* it was found out that the following line is not there :

"It is thus clear that traditionally, the Sikhs whether they kept *keshas* (un-tampered hair) or not but if they had not been baptized were all *sahaj-dharis*."

Infact, the illustration of *sahajdhari* given in the *Mahan Kosh* shows a Sikh with turban and full beard. Thus Bhai Harbans Lal was trying to give an impression about Bhai Kahn Singh's views different from what they actually were.

Is this jugglery of scholarship ?

Ishwinder Singh  
*<ishwinder@sancharnet.in>*

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### MCLEOD CONTROVERSY

Dear Editor,

I just read the article of the McLeod Controversy (*Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Vol IV, Issue 1) by Sardar Ishwinder Singh and I must say it is one of the few attempts "to take a dispassionate look" at the issue.

I think the crucial point in the whole debate is methodology, sincerity and self-reflexivity. McLeod can be easily and convincingly criticised for his ethnocentric approach and his failure to apply "western" methodology (outside history) - about which he is so proud and which already emerged in the late 70's. I think he, and other scholars too, should have a close(er) look at these debates in social sciences. The "Writing Culture Debate" is just one example. McLeod and other scholars neglected many crucial developments in social sciences like

the questing of ‘objectivity’ (Marcus, George E. & Dick Cushman, C. James) and the need to focus on “Partial Truths”, as James Clifford puts it. Furthermore little or no attention is paid in the debate to following points:

- The role of oral tradition in history and Performance (Bauman & Briggs)
- Aspects of “Othering” (J Fabian)
- Politics of writing (J Clifford, P Rabinow, T Asad, S Tyler, P Bourdieu)
- The role of power constellations (M Foucault, E W Said)
- The role of oriental scholars (which McLeod obviously seems to be) (E W Said)
- The importance of emotions in scholarship (R Rosaldo)

I think both sides should try to have a close(er) look at debates which might be fruitful for a better understanding of Sikh philosophy, history and Sikhs as human beings.

Khushwant Singh  
Germany

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WHO PAID FOR FREEDOM ?

Dear Editor,

Through the esteemed columns of your magazine I want to bring to the notice of all the Sikhs a glaring miscarriage of human justice. India was not partitioned with the consent of those people who were to be uprooted. They were simply informed and ordered to move out from the places, where they had lived for countless generations. This was gross injustice even in the eyes of international law.

Similar treatment was meted to European Jews but more particularly to the Jewish people of Germany and Poland. Not going into the details further, it will be sufficient to mention here that the Govt and people of Germany have collectively compensated the Jews who suffered the trauma. Now, why not our own people who were made to suffer against their wishes ? At the time of partition the properties were evaluated arbitrarily and later a heavy cut was enforced for no cogent legal reason.

Whole country got the freedom but these people paid the cost and suffered the most. It is time the Govt of India compensated all such people who got far less than what they left behind. Obviously,

human loss cannot be compensated.

I appeal to all the saner elements of Sikh Community to voice this demand in a most forceful way. We have an example of German compensation. Our case, if not better, is quite similar.

With lots of hopes,

Harbans Singh Aujla
Moonak, Sangrur

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### **GURDWARA MANAGEMENT UNDER THE CONCEPT OF GURU GRANTH-GURU PANTH**

Dear Editor

This article is in response to the two articles published in *The Sikh Review* in the months of August 2003 and January 2004 by Dr Jaswant Singh Neki and Dr Amrik Singh, respectively.

Guru Gobind Singh, by his precept and demonstration had clearly indicated how the Panthic affairs, which would include management of Sikh institutions and gurdwaras, have to be run under the collective leadership of Guru Granth-Guru Panth. This concept of dual guru-ship needs elucidation.

During the reign of the Ten Gurus from 1469 to 1708, both the spiritual (*Piri*) and temporal (*Miri*) powers were vested in the Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh bifurcated this power into Guru Granth and Guru Panth. Guru Granth as the Divine Light is supreme of the two powers and only those decisions, which are taken in its presence and are in the spirit of *gurbani* shall bear the stamp of *gurmatta*.

The concept of Guru Granth-Guru Panth was successfully practised by the *Misl Sardars* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They constituted *Sarbat Khalsa* under the aegis of the Akal Takht that in turn selected *Panj Piaras* to coordinate and manage the entire Panth.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* is ingrained in Sikhism and is in consonance with Guru Nanak's maxim of *panch parwan panch pardhan*, so that the five approved and blessed persons (saints) form the presidium. Guru Gobind Singh had demonstrated their role and authority when he at their command quitted the Chamkaur Garhi, paid fine for bowing to Pir Dadu's grave and dispatched *Panj Piaras* to accompany Baba Banda Singh Bahadur as his advisors when he was sent to Punjab to establish rule of law there.

The voting system and appointment of Takht *jathedars* are foreign to the Sikh tradition and precept, and have proved to be harmful. The Sikh way of selection of managing committees is by consensus as implied in the concept of Guru Granth-Guru Panth.

The remedy for our ills lies (a) in our spiritual uplift by *Parchar*; b) in restoring dominance of spirituality (*piri*) over temporality (*miri*) and; c) in reviving the institution of *Panj Piaras* right from the grass root level, i.e., the gurdwara to the Apex Body (*Sarbat Khalsa*) which should be formed under the aegis of the Akal Takht to manage the Sikh affairs. The best way to select the *Panj Piaras* or the gurdwaras managing committees is the method adopted by the *Misl Sardars* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Brig Hardit Singh  
Chandigarh

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#### **MAJ GEN JASWANT SINGH VISITS LEBANON AND EGYPT**

Dear Editor,

I visited Lebanon and Egypt for two weeks starting on 13th March 2004. Lebanon visit included Beirut the capital, Saida, Tyre, Byblos, Ballbek, various national museums, forts and important mosques. My main interest was to interact with local Muslim, Christian residents and sparsely scattered Palestinians. It was extremely surprising that locals there had not seen a Sikh in full-fledged form. I took pains to acquaint them with cardinal Sikh tenets and Sikh religion.

In Egypt I went around Cairo, its capital and the fifth largest city of the world, and Alexandria the second largest city in Egypt. Besides visiting Pyramids and the Sphinx, I saw the Museum, Pampey's Piller, Unknown Soldier, beautiful Alexandria beach and the Nile, and interacted with tourists of various nationalities. A few enlightened tourists loudly called me 'Indian', 'Maharaja', from Amitabh Bachchan's country. One toll-tax inspector swore by God not to let our tourist car go past till he shook hands with me, which I did. A few batches of school children keenly took group photographs with me amidst them.

Muslim ladies both in Lebanon and Egypt wear a headscarf or black *burqa*, though they wear black trousers, black shirts along with it. Their spoken language is Arabic and French. I did not meet a single Sikh in proper form though I was told some immigrant Sikhs lived there in shaven appearance.

Maj Gen (retd) Jaswant Singh  
Secretary, IOSS



## PRIMARY SOURCES OF SIKH HISTORY – NEED FOR RESEARCH –

Sikhs are lucky in having a number of primary sources of their history, written by eminent Sikhs, which throw light on the history of Sikhs as well as philosophy of their religion. Starting with Bhai Gurdas whose incomparable *vars* are respected as key to *gurbani*, there is a long list of early scholars who produced classics of Sikh literature. Some of these are: *Bansawalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka* by Bhai Kesar Singh Chhibar, *Mahima Prakash* by Sarup Das Bhalla, *Parchian* by Sewa Das, *Gurkirat Prakash* by Vir Singh Ball, *Das Guru Katha* by Kankan, *Sri Guru Panth Prakash* by Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Suraj Prakash* by Bhai Santokh Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* by Giani Gian Singh; besides various *Janamsakhis*, *Gurparnaliyan*, *Gurbilas*, and compositions of Bhai Nand Lal.

We frequently turn to these sources to find answers to all questions relating to Sikh history and doctrines. Some of these epics enjoy a degree of religious sanctity. An example is the *Suraj Parkash* of Bhai Santokh Singh, the recital and exegesis of which is a regular feature in most gurdwaras. It must be remembered, however, that this literature was produced by individual human scholars and not by the Gurus. As such at times their views and versions may not strictly conform to *gurmat*. The recent controversy over *Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin* is an example.

To derive full benefit from these classics and to avoid pitfalls, the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh has decided to undertake in-depth studies on this literature with the help of competent scholars working full time on work assigned to them in a phased manner. They will be given suitable honorarium and provided with required facilities. Advantage will also be taken of post-graduate students registered with universities who will be helped through scholarships, and expected to participate in these studies on specific assignments.

Each scholar will complete his study on the given assignment in one year, and his findings will be published by the Institute of Sikh Studies.

The Institute needs funds for this project. The cost of hiring a scholar or fellowship for one year will be approximately Rs 1 lakh. Through this announcement, we invite donors to sponsor one or more fellowship(s). Their contribution will be duly acknowledged in the *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, as well as on the resultant publication. We look forward to an encouraging response to this appeal.

– Editor